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SINTRAM  
A NORTHERN  
DRAMA

BY A GRADUATE OF BALLIOL

23 498.725



PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS  
LONDON, W.C.

Messrs KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & C

*With the Compliments of the* AUTHOR.

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# **SINTRAM**

**A NORTHERN DRAMA**





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# S I N T R A M

A NORTHERN DRAMA

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

A GRADUATE OF BALLIOL

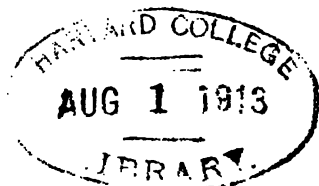
LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO. LTD

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1895

~~23498.107~~  
23498. 725



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*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.  
Edinburgh and London*

If yet your world is gay and lit with smiles,  
And never have ye watched in helpless woe  
While life from fondest heart was ebbing slow ;  
Nor trod the weary road where naught beguiles,  
And cares on cares succeeding mark the miles ;  
Nor seen the fairy palace fallen low  
That youth and wealth and joy had built ; and  
know

Of inward struggles naught, nor tempter's wiles :  
Read not this book, but haste, while yet ye may,  
To make you merry in your little light,  
And as the painted moth to take your flight  
Thro' the brief sunshine of a single day ;  
But onward read all ye, and with me stay,  
Who know the paths of sorrow and of night.



# SINTRAM

## A NORTHERN DRAMA

*The scene is laid in Norway towards the close of the eleventh century. An interval of six years elapses between the 1st and 2nd Acts, and of twelve years between the 4th and 5th Acts.*

## **Dramatis Personæ.**

BIORN, *Lord of Drontheim in Norway.*

SINTRAM, *his son.*

FOLKO, *Lord of Montfauçon in Normandy.*

ENGELTRAM, *his son.*

ERIC, *Earl of Hamar in Norway.*

ASTOLFO, *a Sicilian doctor.*

ROLF, *a squire in attendance on Sintram.*

A CHAPLAIN.

A HERMIT.

A FISHERMAN, *and his sons RURIC and OTTO.*

*The WARDEN of the Moonrock Castle.*

A HERALD.

GUTHRED, *a peasant.*

THORA, *daughter of Biorn.*

GABRIELLE, *wife of Folko.*

FISHERMAN'S WIFE, *and her daughters ULRICA and ULLA.*

*An EVIL SPIRIT, known some time as the LITTLE MASTER.*

A LOST SOUL.

DEATH.

SEVEN ANGELS.

*Knights, Ladies, Squires, Pages, Soldiers, Servants,  
Peasants, Children.*

# SINTRAM

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—BIORN'S *Castle near Drontheim.*

BIORN *and many Knights at a banquet.*

ROLF *and the CHAPLAIN converse apart.*

*Storm without.*

ROLF.

Hearken how the wind is raging,

And the iron bolts are rattling ;

Nay, the solid vault of stone

Seems to quaver, and the arches

Wailing answer with a moan.

CHAPLAIN.

Neither care to me nor terror

Outward nature brings, but only

Inward passions fierce and bold,

Driving storms of rage and cruelty,

Hearts grown hard and love grown cold.



**ROLF.**

Sounds like these are more than nature's,

Sounds unearthly, sounds foreboding

Evil on some guilty head.

Ah ! why stare the guests so strangely ?

Cometh spectre from the dead ?

*[Enter SINTRAM wildly as though pursued, and clings to BIORN.]*

**SINTRAM.**

Father, close behind me Death

Follows, and his icy breath

Chills all my frame ;

Creeps another close beside,

I cannot name.

Would that I had rather died

Than lived to hear

That step so near.

O knight and father !

Help thy son,

Or I had rather

Life were done.

Ah ! that Other worse than Death  
Nameless horror threateneth.

Help me, father !

ROLF.

Little help his earthly father  
For unearthly strife can give him ;  
Haste thyself to speak with power,  
Bid the evil spirits quit him,  
Waiting not the morning hour.

[*Followed by ROLF, the Chaplain says a  
prayer over SINTRAM, who suffers  
himself to be led away. Exeunt  
SINTRAM, ROLF, and CHAPLAIN.*]

BIORN.

Pardon, noble knights of Norway,  
That the gladness of our feasting  
For a moment hath been stayed  
By my son all dazed and moonstruck,  
Like a girl of dreams afraid.  
Each returning Yule-tide sees him  
Smitten with these wild delusions ;  
Since his fifth year it is so :

Soon 'tis past, nor worth remembrance ;

Let the wine and voices flow.

*[All keep silent. The storm rages ever  
more fiercely.]*

Nay, shake off this childish terror.

Doth a boy of twelve years fright you,

Lords and warriors of the North ?

Songs can now be sung the merrier

That the chaplain hath gone forth.

First I call upon thee, Ivar,

As the youngest knight among us,

For a song of love, of laughter ;

Then Knight Harald, chanting sweetly

Lays of old, shall follow after.

YOUNG KNIGHT [*singing*].

A maiden there lived by the shores of the sea,

And a maiden so fair she was destined for me ;

Her lips were as roses, her locks were as gold,

Her voice sounded softer than ere can be told.

I sought her, I wooed her ; she laughed me to  
scorn :

“ For one yet is living, disgraced and forlorn,

To whom the same words as to me thou hast said,

And another, thou false-hearted youth, she is  
dead."

Who told her I knew not——

*[His voice is drowned by the storm.]*

Sing in such a storm I cannot,  
Storm that seems to mock our feasting ;  
Nor can sing of joys and love,  
Where I hear so strangely sounding  
Moanings from the vault above.

OLD KNIGHT.

Biorn, neither songs nor jesting  
Forth can drive the darkening horror,  
Gloom that evermore doth thicken ;  
Thou must tell the dreadful story  
Why thine only son is stricken.

BIORN.

Listen then, my silent warriors.  
Would ye hear the hidden story ?  
Know that nothing ye shall hear,  
Nothing !—And if this affright you,  
Call the chaplain in your fear.  
*[Springing up wildly.]*

Ha ! ha ! the whirlwind rages o'er the snow ;  
Ha ! ha ! the hounds of hell have slipped their  
chains,  
And rush from out the fiery gulfs below,  
And naked Death stalks shivering thro' the  
plain.  
My comrades wild they call me ; bring quick  
my horse, my horse,  
And thro' the frozen night we'll speed our  
headlong course.

*[Exit BIORN. All the guests rise in  
confusion.]*

OLD KNIGHT.

Let us hence ; I will not tarry  
In this evil-haunted castle.  
Better face the drift of snow  
Than beneath a roof take shelter  
That God's blessing doth not know.

SCENE II.—SINTRAM'S *sleeping-room*. SIN-  
TRAM *lies asleep*. *At his bedside sit* ROLF  
*and the* CHAPLAIN.

CHAPLAIN.

If no promise bids thy silence,  
Tell me all the secret story,  
Now that Sintram sleeps so fast,  
Breathes so gently, witness giving  
That his frightful dreams are past.

ROLF.

'Twas the holy eve of Christmas  
Eight long years ago, and Biorn  
Seemed all girt around with joy :  
Wife the gentlest, daughters fairest,  
And his yet untroubled boy.  
Ever in his wars triumphant,  
First in fame of Norway's chieftains ;  
But alas ! had counsel taken  
With wild spirits, ill enduring  
That the old gods were forsaken.  
Priest within his castle never

Would he suffer long to linger,  
And the merchants, men of peace,  
These he hated and their counsels  
That the rude old ways should cease.  
Then the Christmas came, and with it,  
Came his friends in ill adventures ;  
Out the boar's-head cup was brought,  
Remnant of the pagan worship,  
Made of gold most strangely wrought.  
Vows they vowed the boar's-head grasping,  
Some of love and some of vengeance ;  
Ah ! and Biorn, cup in hand,  
Swore to slay the stranger merchants,  
All that on his coast might land.  
Scarce the evil words were spoken,  
Stood a warder in the doorway :  
" Merchants two from Holstein's shore,  
Tempest-driven to your harbour,  
Stand without and help implore."  
Horror-stricken stood Sir Biorn,  
Strove a moment, strove too feebly,  
Sank beneath the demon's power.  
" By the oath that I have uttered,  
Die they shall within this hour :

Bring them, pierce them with your lances."

Grace I had the words to murmur :

"Must not such command obey."

"Get thee to the women's quarters,"

Answered he, "and there may'st pray."

As I went I saw two figures,

One was tall, of death-like pallor,

Seemed all bones,—I marked him well ;

Small the other, and his visage

Frightful like a fiend from hell.

[SINTRAM *starts up wildly in his sleep.*]

CHAPLAIN.

Stay, for Sintram in his slumber

Starts in dreadful fear and shudders.

[*They soothe him.*]

ROLF.

Lest we raise these dreams again,

Let me tell no more the aspect

Of those dread companions twain.

Then I quickly sought Verena,

Mistress mine and his sweet mother,

Clouded now her face with woe,



Sadly gazing in the moonlight  
On the crowded court below.  
Death awaiting knelt the merchants,  
Death preparing stood the spearmen,  
And I saw a serpent writhe  
Round them, and upraised above them  
Fleshless hand that held a scythe.  
Then like warning bell in tempest  
Clear Verena's voice resounded :  
"Think upon thine only son,  
Spare for him these men, and steadfast  
Stand against the Evil One."  
Back Sir Biorn spoke in anger,  
Bid her cease, and in his madness  
Swore an oath : "If these men live,  
Sintram o'er to death and devil  
By the golden boar I give."

[SINTRAM *groans.*]

From his eyes red flames came leaping,—  
Knight the flame-eyed thence they call him,—  
And to strike and slay he bade ;  
But aloft with hands uplifted,  
"Saviour, help !" Verena prayed.  
In an instant fled the spectres,

And the spearmen, blindly reeling,  
Struck their weapons all in vain ;  
Open burst the gate, and safely  
Stood the strangers on the plain ;  
Gained their battered ship, and slowly  
Reached at last a friendly haven.  
They were gone, but we within  
Quickly must begin the reaping  
Of the harvest of our sin.  
Those two hideous phantoms mounted  
Silent to the turret chamber  
Where lay Sintram sweetly sleeping.  
" Rolf, didst see," Verena whispered,  
" Ghastly comrades upward creeping ?"  
Numbed with fear we stood a moment,  
Then we followed, ill foreboding ;  
Sintram found, as e'en this night,  
Like to one from evil spirits  
Fleeing away in mad affright.  
Thro' the wintry nights returning  
Thrice the dreadful dreams o'ertook him,  
Left him wan and sad and weak ;  
Back each Christmas season coming  
Seem his very life to seek.

Other times he fears no danger,  
All too bold he is and reckless,  
Must be such in home so wild ;  
Yet all love him for the likeness  
Of the mother in the child.  
Ah ! his mother ! Scarce my faltering  
Voice can tell the tale of sorrow,  
For I knew her from her birth,  
Serving in her father's castle,  
Knew her in the days of mirth.  
And when Biorn came and courted,  
Most renowned of Norway's chieftains,  
Came and bore his bride away,  
I was chosen by her father  
In her retinue to stay.  
Other now the days and dismal ;  
Whether she her life had offered  
For those strangers, or that God,  
Secret ways of grace contriving,  
Willed to end the path she trod :  
Scarcely from his dreams of horror  
Sintram rose, when sweet Verena  
Fell, by piercing pains assailed ;  
All our care and tender watching

For that sickness naught availed.  
Then a great physician coming  
From Salerno's sunny waters  
Spoke and sadly sentence gave :  
Naught from death, all quick approaching,  
Our sweet lady more could save.  
Daily grew the wound, devouring  
All her strength, and past all healing ;  
In her heart was wound yet worse.  
Ever wilder grew Sir Biorn,  
Smitten with his guilty curse.  
Then at last to her entreaties  
Biorn yielded, that their daughters  
From that home so God-forsaken  
To their Norman friends and kinsfolk  
O'er the western sea be taken.  
But the boy he kept beside him.  
Then Verena gently called me,  
And I swore on bended knee  
To the child, as true love knoweth,  
Father, mother, both to be.  
In the haven stood the vessel,  
In her room the daughters lingered,  
Gentle breezes fanned the bay :

Must be borne the mournful message,  
Time it was to speed away.  
Then she spoke so sweet and sadly :  
" Let us not our sorrow lengthen ;  
Keep a true and loving heart,  
Lean upon the couch and give me  
One more kiss before we part."  
One last glance they took and left her,  
Never more to see that mother.  
Quickly ebb'd her strength, till came  
Hour long foreseen, when gently  
Flicker'd out life's feeble flame.  
Ah ! the anguish of that hour,  
Who can tell it, or when Sintram  
Asked with wistful look of pain :  
" Why doth mother lie so silent ;  
Will she never speak again ? "

## CHAPLAIN.

Nay, take comfort, for this mother  
Watches faithful o'er her children ;  
Death but little can destroy.  
Look ! her child's face, as we name her,  
Shows a radiant smile of joy.

SCENE III.—*Great Hall. BIORN standing alone. Enter SINTRAM.*

BIORN.

Where is Rolf?

SINTRAM.

I know not, father ;  
We were parted 'mid the mountains.

BIORN.

Then before this day is done  
Twenty spears shall pierce his body,  
Guarding ill mine only son.

SINTRAM.

First your only son must perish,  
For my Rolf I love and need him,  
And your spearmen's every dart  
First must pierce this breast unworthy  
Ere it reach his faithful heart.

BIORN.

Is it so ? Then life I grant him,  
But as exile from my castle.

*SINTRAM*

SINTRAM.

Then as exile I will go  
Rolf to serve o'er land and water,  
Love and loyalty to show.

BIORN.

Is it so? Seems then this squire  
Here must stay.

SINTRAM.

E'en so it seemeth.

BIORN.

Cam'st thou all alone?

SINTRAM.

There came  
Pilgrim strange, who said he knew thee.  
Need was none to tell his name.  
'Mid the snow-clad mountains riding,  
Rolf and I, we heard, astonished,  
Hollow rattling, piteous moans ;  
Pale and gaunt, uprose a stranger,  
All his robes were deck'd with bones.

"Say, what dost thou here?" I asked  
him.

Thro' his chattering teeth he answered :

"Death is all my life."—"What mean  
Bones hung round thee?"—"Relics gathered  
Far and near where I have been."—

"Pilgrim then thou art, and must not  
Perish here, but mount behind me."

"Mount I will," he said, and sprang  
Quick behind me, making rattle  
All the bones with horrid clang.

At the sound, my horse, affrighted,  
Onward dashed, I could not hold him ;  
Rolf to follow tried in vain ;

Many a frozen stream we'd traversed  
When at last I spoke again :

"Gird thy garments closer, pilgrim,  
Then the bones less loud will rattle ;  
Clasp thine ice-cold arms less tight,  
Breathe not ice-cold breath upon me,  
Then I'll check my courser's flight."

Loos'ning not his hold, he answered :  
"Bones must rattle, 'tis their custom ;  
Grips not yet mine hand thine heart ;



Nor my breath thy blood yet freezes ;  
See the place where we must part."  
Then I saw, with mighty wondering,  
We were close before the castle,  
Panting stood my steed half dead ;  
Down all nimbly sprang the stranger,  
And with voice of warning said :  
" Give my greeting to thy father,  
Biorn with the eyes of fire,  
Well I know him, all too well ;  
Many a day my work he worketh,  
Need is none my name to tell.  
Need'st but tell him of my garments,  
He will know me—all shall know me."  
Then like silent shadow creeping  
He was gone, and in the hamlet  
Passing bell I heard and weeping.

## BIORN.

Truth he spoke, for well I know him ;  
Now go rest thyself, my son ;  
Rolf shall meet with kindly cheer ;  
Nay, if soon he come not homeward,  
Shall be sought for far and near.

SCENE IV.—*The same.* BIORN seated with  
the LITTLE MASTER, who is clad in a loose  
robe hung with bones.

BIORN.

Tell me, why this strange apparel,  
Trailing robe with bones embroidered?

These belong to him who goes  
With me when in battle raging  
Death I scatter 'mid my foes.

LITTLE MASTER.

Many garments, many figures,  
Many voices, strange disguises,  
As occasion calls, I borrow :  
Sit with thee to-day and trifle,  
Holy Writ expound to-morrow.  
Robes of Death I wear them only  
With a friend to me o'ergiven,  
Bound by ties to last unbroken ;  
Death and I for him are brothers,  
Borrowed robe doth this betoken.

[Enter SINTRAM.]

## SINTRAM.

Rolf hath told me, strangest pilgrim,  
Thou wert sitting with my father,  
After yesterday's wild ride.  
I have come to give thee greeting,  
Well thou didst my horse bestride.

LITTLE MASTER [*uneasily*].

Naught I know of what ye tell me.

## SINTRAM.

Thou art mad or must remember  
How we found thee in the snow,  
Bade thee mount, and how thou told'st me,  
Well my father thou didst know.

[*The LITTLE MASTER hesitates, and  
shuffles towards the door.*]

## LITTLE MASTER.

True, my good young lord and hero,  
What ye say is right, and all things  
True and right ye please to say.  
Let me crave for your permission  
Quickly hence to go my way.

BIORN [*laughing boisterously*].

Ha ! ha ! ha ! a sight amazing,  
All his tricks and gibes forgotten,  
Little Master, mastered quite  
By the boy, and cringing, whining,  
Sinks like whipped bound out of sight.

[*The LITTLE MASTER turns suddenly  
on BIORN, and speaks with dreadful  
menace.*]

LITTLE MASTER.

Stay thy folly and thy laughter,  
For with thee, as well thou knowest,  
Holds another reckoning.  
Listen while I strike the lute-strings,  
Ponder well the words I sing.

[*He takes an old and dusty lute from  
the wall, and with marvellous speed  
having tuned it, sings in harsh tone.*]

The flower all fragrant and bright was thine own,  
But in folly away thou hast gambled thy right,  
And now to a servant art changed from a  
knight,  
And naught for thy sin can atone.

The flower all fragrant and bright was thine own,  
Why held'st thou not fast to thy treasure and  
right?

Thou servant of sin, and no longer a knight.  
Now dwell'st thou in anguish alone,  
[*Louder.*] And for ever in anguish shalt dwell,  
[*Still louder.*] For thy name it is written  
in hell.

[*The strings of the lute break, and a cloud  
of dust covering instrument and player,  
the room appears as in a mist. BIORN  
sinks back in a swoon.*]

[*Aside.*] Thou, too, shalt be mine for ever,  
Who, with innocence of boyhood,  
Now dost drive me hence away ;  
Sweetest fruits of knowledge plucking,  
Bitter penalty shalt pay. [*Exit.*]

SINTRAM.

O my father ! what doth ail thee?  
That thou sinkest helpless backward,  
Gasping for thy very breath,  
Giving forth no word in answer,  
Pale like one that's nigh to death.

BIORN [*faintly*].

'Twas not Death—that here was sitting—

'Tis not yet—his time to conquer—

But another—often here—

[*Speech fails him.*]

SINTRAM [*shouting*].

Rolf, bring help, and hasten hither.

[*To BIORN.*] Speak, what fails thee, father  
dear?

[*ROLF and attendants hasten in, and  
BIORN is borne away senseless.*]

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*Wooded height overlooking a bay.*

ROLF *seated alone among the trees.*

ROLF [*singing*].

How joyously in this bright noon of spring  
The sparkling waves come dancing to the  
land,  
And then at last upon the golden sand  
Their little load of waters gently fling ;  
And sweetest notes as if in answer ring  
From out the wooded cliffs on either hand,  
Where from the topmost boughs I hear the  
band  
Of many-plumaged songsters softly sing,  
And o'er my head, where spreading branches  
meet,  
The pale green leaves embroider heaven's  
blue ;

The mossy carpet spread beneath my feet  
Is decked with fragrant flowers of fairest  
hue,  
That scarce have scattered yet the morning  
dew,

And fill the southern breeze with perfume sweet.  
[*To himself.*] Alas ! my voice in song to  
raise,

As if among the birds I dwelt,  
Is idle work, and here to gaze  
On Nature's beauty, while around  
Men will not cease their evil ways.  
They pluck the fair first opening bud,  
And cast it reckless to the ground ;  
They wait till quite the water's flood  
Hath ebb'd to make the firm sea sand  
All stained and red with human blood.  
And this fair noonday's radiant light  
My lord doth use with reckless troop  
To seek his foeman, and this height  
I mounted helplessly to watch  
The issue of the wanton fight.  
O Sintram, couldst thou know how dear  
Thou art to me, and how I sink,



O'ercome by sadness and by fear,  
When with thy father terrible  
Thou scatt'rest slaughter far and near.  
Ah, this fair spring with beauty fraught,  
It is the sixth since Biorn rose  
From that great sickness which I thought  
Had been his last, by poisoned breath  
Of pilgrim false most surely brought.  
And Sintram from a boy hath grown  
A man past all control, who ne'er  
Will warning heed or master own ;  
And ne'er in fray most desperate  
To waver or to yield is known.  
His home is lawless cruelty's seat,  
And yet he knoweth gentleness,  
His voice can sound so sad and sweet ;  
No maiden hath he ever wronged,  
No weakness trampled 'neath his feet,  
And children's hearts he hath the grace  
To win and take their fears away ;  
The old and sick they love his face,  
And 'neath those haggard features seem  
His mother's lineaments to trace.  
And tho' beneath the arches fair

Of God's own house he kneels not oft,  
At least his lips will move in prayer  
When sounds the bell for Angelus  
In sweet waves thro' the evening air.

*[Starts up and looks out seaward.]*

But see, with flags and banners gay,  
A mighty ship of Norman build  
Comes ever nearer to the bay ;  
And all the decks are filled with men  
And arms that catch the noontide ray.

*[Enter SINTRAM with armed men on the  
right, and meets troopers entering  
from the left.]*

TROOPER.

Welcome news, I bring you, Master,  
For no more our foes lie hidden ;  
Dare to seek us face to face ;  
• See their ship upon the waters  
Beareth toward the bay apace.

SINTRAM.

Unprepared they thought to find us,  
Scattered in the woods to strike us,  
Wiser counsel they should take.

Till they land, lie hid in ambush,  
Then resistless onset make.

ROLF.

Stay your hand, lest haply smiting  
Friends, not enemies.

SINTRAM.

Be silent ;

Strike we will, whate'er the foe.  
He who dares to touch our coastland,  
Sintram's sword shall surely know.

*[They pass forward. ROLF slowly  
follows, and exit.]*

SCENE II.—*A sandy bay on the coast. In front  
FOLKO with dagger uplifted kneels on  
SINTRAM. Norman warriors around. Be-  
hind, on raised deck of a ship, GABRIELLE  
and her maidens.*

FOLKO.

Die, thou blood-stained pirate chieftain,  
Lest again in treacherous ambush  
Thou mayst lurk to spoil and slay.

SINTRAM.

Strike, strange foeman ; thou hast conquered.

GABRIELLE [*from the ship*].

Knight, thine hand in mercy stay.

[FOLKO *springs up*.]

Spare the helpless foe and fallen ;

Mercy is the noblest conquest.

FOLKO [*to SINTRAM*].

Life and freedom take, and know  
Both to gentle voice beseeching  
Of my Gabrielle dost owe.

[*Raises SINTRAM, who sinks weeping  
on his knees.*]

Can it be? The brooch he weareth  
Bear's claws wrought in gold all curious,  
And upon his helmet, see  
Golden claws proclaim my foeman  
Brave knight Biorn's son to be.  
We are kinsmen ! I had ever  
Thought of our great house all scions  
Deeds ignoble ever scorned,

Would not strike with wanton weapons  
Friendly strangers all unwarned.

SINTRAM.

Well I know your name and greatness.  
Slay me, tho' I am not worthy  
Death to ask from noble hand ;  
Let the light no more behold me,  
Slay me here upon the strand.

FOLKO.

Is't because thou hast been vanquished  
Death thou wishest ? Or is't rather  
Shame for an unknighly deed ?

[SINTRAM *bows his head.*]

Then, brave youth, for reparation  
Thou the more thy life dost need.  
Youth thou art, and yet I tell thee  
Hadst thou shown such dauntless valour  
In a noble cause and just,  
Knight this day I would have made thee,  
Worthy of the glorious trust ;  
Gabrielle had joyous fastened

On thy breast a scarf of azure,  
Placed within thine hands a sword.  
Yet take comfort ; not for ever  
Lost and gone is thy reward.

[GABRIELLE *descends from the ship,*  
*and amid music approaches and*  
*takes SINTRAM by the hand.*]

## GABRIELLE.

Kinsman of my lord, I greet thee,  
Son of mighty Biorn, greeting.  
Norman fields and orchards gay  
Know thy father's fame, and smiling  
Gascon vineyards far away.  
Be not downcast that Sir Folko,  
Dreaded by the Moorish crescent,  
Hath been first to-day, for he,  
Victor ever in all strivings,  
Yields his arms to none but me.  
Lead me to thy father's castle ;  
Folko here hath come to show me  
All the wonders of the North,  
And the old homes whence his fathers  
Sailed on wild adventures forth.

SCENE III.—BIORN's Castle. BIORN, SIN-  
TRAM, FOLKO, GABRIELLE, *seated in the*  
*great hall. Evening.*

GABRIELLE

So my lute hath nothing suffered  
By the journey o'er the waters.

FOLKO.

Let us have the proof and hear  
How the gentle sounds re-echo  
Thro' the arches soft and clear,  
[GABRIELLE *plays awhile on her lute.*]

SINTRAM.

Sweet these sounds all unfamiliar  
In our gloomy halls, and sweeter  
Still would sound your voice in song;  
And the birds the boughs forsaking  
Round the casements all would throng.

GABRIELLE [*singing*].

The sunny days of May have come again,  
Again the earth is painted bright with flowers,  
Again from out a hundred leafy bowers

The birds pour forth their fresh melodious strain.

All joys return but one. Ah ! one in vain  
I call and call again thro' the sad hours,  
And fruitless longing all my heart devours,  
And love and joy within my breast lie slain.  
Cease, nightingale, thy softly rippling voice ;  
Cease, lark, thy merry carols in the skies ;  
O glisten not so brightly flowers of May :  
The loving tones that made me once rejoice  
I hear no more, no more those gentle eyes

I see ; for my sweet love hath sped away.

[To SINTRAM.] Wherefore dost thou sigh  
so deeply ?

Seem so strangely touched and shaken  
By so plain and slight a lay,  
Such as in our land in spring-time  
Many may'st thou hear each day.

SINTRAM.

Then your land must be enchanted,  
Garden echoing songs celestial,  
Jasper-walled and golden-gated,



Bright with never-fading blossoms,  
Each with fragrant dewdrop weighted.

*[He kneels at GABRIELLE'S feet.]*

From this garden fair descending  
Gentleness ye spread and gladness  
O'er the rude disordered world,  
Bringing peace where till your coming,  
Swords were drawn and spears were hurled.

GABRIELLE *[drawing near FOLKO]*.

Half affrighted, dearest Folko,  
Maketh me this strange youth's wildness ;  
Half compassionate I feel,  
Seeing his loneliness and round him  
Hearts of stone and brows of steel.  
But with thee beside me flieth  
All my fear and pity retest.  
*[To SINTRAM.]* Sintram, hither come and take  
This my lute, for thou art skilful  
Sweetest melody to make.

SINTRAM.

Nay, fair lady of Montfauçon,  
These rough hands the strings would sever,  
Iron harp is best for me,

Chords of mighty she-bear's sinews :

Listen to my melody.

*[He takes his harp and sings ever louder  
and more wildly, BIORN joining in  
the chorus. GABRIELLE clings in  
terror to FOLKO.]*

[Sings.] "O whither away while the waves beat  
and roar?"

"I am hoisting my sail for the southern shore."

(Chorus.) Sing ho ! for the land of the beautiful  
flowers.

"I have trodden enough the ice and the snow,  
To dance 'mid the vines and the myrtles I go."

Sing ho ! &c.

And he sailed by moonlight and sailed by day,  
Till he cast his anchor in Naples bay.

Sing ho ! &c.

There stood by the sea a maiden so fair,  
A golden fillet encircled her hair.

Sing ho ! &c.

"God greet thee, fair maiden, and make no  
delay ;

A bride must thou be to me even this day."

Sing ho ! &c.

"O stranger, I may not take thy hand,

This day I'm betrothed to the lord of the land."

Sing ho ! &c.

" Bid him hither his valour to try with the sword,  
And thou be the prize and the victor's reward."

Sing ho ! &c.

Then up came in anger the lord of the land,  
And the Norseman struck him down dead on  
the strand.

Sing ho ! &c.

And the victor leapt up in his gladness and cried,  
" Now mine are his castles, his lands, and his  
bride."

Sing ho ! for the land of the beautiful flowers.

#### FOLKO.

Songs like these I love to hear them,  
Songs of battle and of daring.

Give me warriors true and bold,  
And the iron of their valour

Faith shall turn to purest gold.

Let us sail for Sion's city,

She the maiden now in thraldom,

Palestine our land of flowers,

Strike to earth the Moorish crescent !

Let Jerusalem be ours.

SCENE IV.—*The Castle Garden. Summer evening. SINTRAM hastily trampling thro' the bushes is nigh to stumble over the LITTLE MASTER. In the distance GABRIELLE seated in an arbour.*

LITTLE MASTER.

Whither doth your hot blood bear you,  
Knightly youth, so fast and wildly?

SINTRAM.

Me thou asketh? answer rather,  
Why thou crawlest here unbidden  
In the garden of my father?

LITTLE MASTER.

Perhaps your father might give answer,  
But at least your Highness mighty  
My poor craft will not forbid;  
Snails I catch; of these 'tis certain  
Ye would like your garden rid.  
Yet they make a broth the richest,

And themselves are worth regarding,  
Faces wondrous wise have got,  
Fattened bodies, horns extended ;  
[*Fumbling at a pocket.*] See some samples of  
my lot.

SINTRAM.

Pfui ! Disgusting are these creatures ;  
Cease thy jesting ; tell me plainly  
What thy calling, what thy name ?

LITTLE MASTER.

Many names I'm called most different,  
Yet the substance is the same.  
Grasp at substance, not at shadows ;  
Call me, if a name is needed,  
Little Master, for I teach,  
Those at least who do not fear me,  
Sweet and hidden things to reach.

SINTRAM.

Stupid dwarf ! That I should fear thee !

LITTLE MASTER.

Finer men than you have often——

SINTRAM.

Fool ! Thou may'st my courage try ;  
Here I'll listen till the daylight  
Fades, and darkness veils the sky.

LITTLE MASTER.

Listen then, Lord Sintram valiant,  
Yet I first would give you counsel,  
That ye make your eyes to wander  
Where beneath a bower of roses  
Gabrielle reclineth yonder.

[SINTRAM *perceives* GABRIELLE, and  
*deeply blushes.*]

Nay, to blush there's no occasion ;  
No reproach to love her beauty,  
Your sweet goddess to adore.  
Listen to a pretty story,  
Told in Greece in days of yore.  
Fairest of the fair was Helen,  
Gabrielle her name for Norsemen,  
Wedded to the Spartan king :  
Came a gallant youth, Sir Paris,  
Hearing all her praises sing.  
Sintram we might name him, only

More he had of wit and courage,  
Let not slip the favouring day,  
Wooded and won the heart of Helen,  
Took her in his ship away.  
Ten long years of bliss unspoken,  
Helen's sweet love was his portion,  
Safe within the walls of Troy ;  
Only when those walls had fallen  
Came an end of life and joy.  
Thrice ten years the Moonrock fortress  
Hold ye could, all foes withstanding,  
Sweetest Helen at your side ;  
See the postern door most strangely  
Stands unbarred and open wide.

*[A door in the high garden wall appears  
open, and in the far distance the  
Moonrock Castle lit by the rays of  
the setting sun.]*

Let not pass this hour of fortune,  
Waste not all your youth in sorrow,  
Age will strike us ere we think ;  
Seize the cup of love entrancing,  
Place it to your lips and drink.  
Live the life your youth befitting,

From the waving fields of pleasure  
Golden harvests daily reaping ;  
Virtue's not for present using,  
Needs, like wine, long years of keeping.  
Nay, but virtue, I would ask you,  
What it is if not the using  
Of all powers Nature gives ?  
He that, bravely striving, gathers  
Love and beauty truly lives.  
Listen not to envy's carping ;  
They with dull and feeble senses,  
They who fear to strike and win,  
What their weakness cannot master,  
This they say is vice and sin.  
And the old and tedious preachers  
Bid us practise self-denial,  
Hide from us their deeds in youth,  
And, themselves unfit for pleasure,  
Fasts and vigils preach as truth.  
But the Truth is one, they tell us,  
Both with Beauty and with Goodness.  
Grasp the truth then quickly ; see,  
Helen beauty is and goodness,  
Take her and possess all three.



And if childish spectre haunt you  
Of a Providence above us

All our actions watching o'er :  
Look, this Providence so watchful,  
Open leaves the postern door.  
Be a man, and know your hour ;  
Bear away the priceless treasure ;  
All your troubles gone and past,  
Years of sweetest love await you ;  
Quick ! the sun is setting fast.

[SINTRAM *rushes towards* GABRIELLE,  
*when the Angelus bell is heard.*  
*He stops and makes the sign of the*  
*cross. The* LITTLE MASTER *flies*  
*through the postern door and slams*  
*it violently, the wind howling*  
*strangely. Then* SINTRAM *slowly*  
*approaches* GABRIELLE.]

## SINTRAM

Gentle lady, be not fearful ;  
To the castle let me lead you  
While the daylight slowly dies.

In our Northern mountains often  
Sudden gusts of wind arise.

*[Exeunt towards the castle.]*

SCENE V.—BIORN'S Castle. *The great hall.*  
BIORN, SINTRAM, GABRIELLE, FOLKO, and  
attendants. *Enter a HERALD.*

HERALD.

Eric, mighty Earl of Hamar,  
Sendeth to Sir Biorn greeting,  
Claimeth oxen, iron, gold,  
Full amends to make for injury,  
Cause whereof shall now be told.  
Sailing in the Grecian waters,  
Chios Isle he would have taken,  
Where, some thirty years before,  
Soldiers of the Eastern Cæsar  
Slew his father on the shore ;  
But for Arinborn, your kinsman,  
Sea-king called, who, coming swiftly,  
Swore a mighty oath and strong :  
Eric ne'er should waste and ravage  
Sacred isle of wine and song.

Then they fought upon the waters,  
 Fought till nigh the day had darkened,  
 When of Eric's vessels three,  
 Foundered two, and need o'ertook him  
 From the sea-king's wrath to flee.  
 Sunward come, of you he asketh,  
 Nearest kinsman of the sea-king,  
 Payment of due recompense ;  
 Ere on Niding's heath to meet him  
 Armed for battle eight days hence.

## BIORN.

Ere on Niding's heath we meet him  
 Eight days hence all armed for battle.  
*[Handing him a golden cup.]*  
 Take this cup of Chian wine ;  
 Drink the draught, and in thy mantle  
 Bear away the cup as thine.

## FOLKO.

Meet the mighty Earl thy master  
 From the Folko of Montfaucon ;  
 We shall see us 'mid the rest,

As the sea-king's ancient comrade  
And Sir Biorn's kin and guest.

[*Exit HERALD.*]

GABRIELLE [*smiling to FOLKO*].  
So thou leavest me all lonely,  
Rushing ever into warfare.

BIORN.

If, fair lady, you would deign  
Here to stay, my son, as warden,  
In the castle shall remain.

SINTRAM [*aside, dreamily*].  
So, perchance, it thus did happen  
E'en as now that Menelaus  
Ventured forth to wage some war,  
When knight Paris found his Helen,  
And away the sweet prize bore.  
[GABRIELLE *starts suddenly and clings*  
*to FOLKO.*]

GABRIELLE.

Not without thee, not without thee  
Will I stay ; and the achievements

In the battle I would see;  
 Nor would suffer, wert thou wounded,  
 Other hands to wait on thee.

FOLKO.

Then, like bright and steadfast beacon,  
 That doth light the shipmates striving  
 With the hungry waves for life,  
 Gabrielle shall light our warfare,  
 Be the judge of all our strife.

SCENE VI.—*Niflung's Heath after the battle.*

*On a raised platform sits GABRIELLE with her ladies. Enter FOLKO leading SINTRAM by the hand, followed by THORST, Alarman and Norwegian soldiers.*

FOLKO.

Gabrielle, most gracious lady,  
 Queen of this our glorious battle,  
 Let me lead before thy throne  
 One to whose undaunted valour  
 Victory we owe alone.  
 Biorn here shall be my witness,

He himself in vain the onset  
On the left had stood unshaken ;  
All in vain my Norman horsemen  
Eric on the right had taken.  
For a warrior with strange armour  
In the centre seemed to gather  
Swordsmen, spearmen all together ;  
Death before him spread and terror,  
Spread like fire 'mid the heather.  
All was lost ; my Norman horsemen  
Round their prisoner did waver,  
Biorn's guard stood stiff with fear ;  
To the strange knight rushing onward  
Warrior none would venture near.  
But alone amid the terror  
Stood a youth unmoved, unshaken,  
Knit his brows in dreadful frown,  
Then with battle-axe sprang forward,  
Struck the wondrous stranger down.  
As their champion fell, the terror  
In its turn our foes o'erpowered,  
Courage to our ranks returned ;  
Back they came, the youth their leader,  
And with shame their faces burned.

Shame and fury urged them forward,  
Quickly was the strife decided ;  
Melted Eric's host away :  
This the youth whose heart all fearless  
Won the victory to-day.

*[Shouts of applause from the soldiers.]*

GABRIELLE.

Welcome ; yet I would the victor  
Were in chivalry's fair order  
Bid to mount a loftier height ;  
Squire let him be no longer,  
Let him kneel and rise a knight.

*[Renewed shouts. SINTRAM kneels at a  
sign from FOLKO, who speaks to him  
with solemnity]*

FOLKO.

O thou who would'st be gloriously upraised,  
And the new dignity of knight receive,  
Take heed that by thee rightly be appraised  
The solemn pledge all evil ways to leave,  
All sin to fly and all discourteous deeds ;  
The Holy Church with last breath to defend -

The widow and the orphan in their needs,  
And all poor toilers ever to befriend ;  
Not grasping at another's wealth or power ;  
Not swelled with pride tho' first in noble  
strife ;

Loyal, just, and humble to thy dying hour :  
This is true chivalry, this must be thy life.  
*[Solemnly dubs him knight, and then  
again presents him to GABRIELLE.]*

## GABRIELLE.

Knight Sir Sintram, the award  
Gives to thee the battle's prize.  
In thine hand I place this sword :  
Be a faithful knight and wise,  
Liegeman of the Heavenly Lord.  
Knight Sir Sintram, on thy breast  
While this azure scarf I tie,  
On thine heart be deep impressed  
Gentleness and purity,  
This is Gabrielle's behest.  
*[She gives him her hands to kiss. Then  
BIORN leads ERIC forward.]*



## BIORN.

Ere ye leave your seat of judgment,  
Noble lady, let your welcome  
Greet the brave foe of this morn ;  
Now all feuds for ever buried,  
Peace perpetual we have sworn.

## ERIC.

Gracious lady, when a chieftain  
Both by sea and land is beaten,  
Time it is to sue for peace ;  
Yet no craven flight hath witnessed  
Niflung's heath or isles of Greece.

## GABRIELLE.

Brave heart best 'mid loss is proven ;  
Noble Eric, let me greet you.

## FOLKO.

**Witness all my Normans give ;  
Adversary worthy art thou,  
Better linked in peace to live.**

## BIORN.

Could'st thou tell us who so bravely  
Led thy foot till Sintram's weapon  
Laid him dead upon the ground?  
Rolf hath gone to give him burial  
Yonder on the oak-clad mound.

## ERIC.

More than I can tell thou askest :  
We were forging arms and armour  
Three nights since 'mid talk and song,  
Came the blast of sudden trumpet,  
And repeated loud and long.  
Up I sprang, I knew not wherefore,  
All the others stayed and shivered,  
And the dogs I called in vain,  
E'en the fiercest crouched and cowered,  
Whined and writhed as if in pain.  
Torch in one hand, sword in other,  
Strode I to the outer tower,  
Open made the wicket door,  
Met a knight of smallest stature,  
Strange accoutrements he wore,

"Oh, how much ado thou makest  
O'er one small man asking shelter."  
Scarlet grew my face with shame ;  
Bade him enter, join my warriors ;  
Half reluctant in he came.  
Never ways of guest were stranger,  
Sometimes merry, sometimes bitter,  
Sometimes shrinking as with fear.  
Never horse nor hound nor falcon  
But would flee when he came near.  
He had been in every country,  
With the Saracens and Grecians  
Seemed familiar, and his name  
Twice or thrice he told us, strangely  
Never sounded quite the same.  
And that name none could remember  
Nor describe his features clearly ;  
And of stature tho' so small,  
In essays of strength and cunning  
First he was among us all.  
Armourer of all most skilful  
Soon he showed himself in forging  
Weapons none had seen before ;  
Frightful, deadly, till I told him,



Such I ne'er would use in war.  
But his leadership and counsels  
These to use were not forbidden :  
And a triumph he foretold :  
Strange he fell, tho' hath young Sintram.  
Hand so strong and heart so bold.  
[Enter ROLF and attendants pallid  
with fear.]

ROLF.

Pardon that we venture hither  
Unfulfilled your will to bury  
Worthily the stranger knight ;  
As we loosed his vizor gently,  
Back we started at the sight ;  
Livid face we saw distorted  
With a grin of fiendish malice,  
And a dreadful stench arose  
Like from charnel-house o'erpowering,  
And our blood within us froze.  
[After a pause.]  
So we left the corpse unburied,  
And have hastened hither, fearing  
E'en one backward glance to throw.

That I thought had grown so mild ?  
Wherefore wildly strike the branches ?  
Speak, O speak, my foster child !

## SINTRAM.

Speak I will, and bid thee hasten,  
Rolf, and leave me, for thy dwellings  
Are not mine ; that garden fair,  
Where a thousand angel voices  
Murmur sweet in summer air.  
And if haply once the portals  
Opened and I gazed enraptured,  
Blast from out the icy North  
Quickly closed them fast and bid me  
Wander in the darkness forth.

## ROLF.

Sintram, hear me, knight and master.  
Hold ye not e'en now the glittering  
Sword that her sweet hand hath pressed ?  
Waves not yet reward of valour,  
Azure scarf upon your breast ?  
See the sword and scarf betokening

Noble deeds and life ennobled,  
Nor your happy words unsay,  
Earthly joy ye wished no greater.

SINTRAM.

Ah ! so was it on that day.

*[He bows his head and weeps. The sun  
has set and it grows dark. SINTRAM  
starts up and speaks in ever louder  
tones.]*

Now the day is past and over ;

Gabrielle awhile illumined

All my life ; the sun was high :

Sunk hath now my sun for ever,

Darkness creepeth o'er my sky.

Woods and hills are veiled with darkness,

And the fiends are loose, and vainly

Strives the moon to cast a ray.

Ha ! the clouds her face have covered,

Into night and hell away !

*[He rushes out wildly. ROLF kneels  
and prays.]*

SCENE II.—*Inside a Fisherman's cottage. The FISHERMAN, his WIFE, his son OTTO, and other Children. Violent storm without.*

FISHERMAN.

All the years that I have laboured  
Day and night upon these coastlands,  
Stranger storm has never been.  
On the waters shone the moonlight,  
In the sky no cloud was seen,  
As beside our boat we rested,  
Shadowed by the rocks o'erhanging,  
Looking at the distant beach,  
There we saw two wondrous figures,  
White wands in the hands of each.  
One was tall, and in the moonlight  
Beardless face I saw, and raven  
Locks disordered, but in vain  
Sought I to descry the other,  
Often tho' I looked again.  
Only this I saw, that sometimes  
To a dwarf the figure dwindled,  
**Sometimes seemed an inky cloud,**

Batlike wings at times appearing,  
Garments like a dead man's shroud.  
Both their wands were waving strangely,  
Then upon the sand drew circles,  
Till the youth to falter seemed,  
Stood uncertain ; then all sudden  
In his hands a dagger gleamed,  
And a lock he severed quickly  
From his hair, as one in frenzy,  
And the other, who stood by,  
Snatched the lock with eager gestures,  
Then sent forth a hellish cry.  
But his words they could not reach me,  
For the storm, that rose so sudden,  
Filled the air with deafening roar,  
Lightning flashed thro' mist and darkness,  
Waves like mountains struck the shore.  
Scarce from the o'erwhelming waters  
Could we drag our boat to shelter,  
Scarce ourselves could hasten hither  
'Mid unearthly moanings, making  
Blood to freeze and strength to wither.  
And a tall and pallid spectre  
Forward rushed amid the waters,



Clad in garment hung with bones,  
And I heard the waters echo  
With the sound of dying groans.

## FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

Even we within the cottage  
All were startled by the whirlwind,  
Which no storm-clouds did betoken,  
And poor Ruric's troubled slumbers  
By the whistling wind were broken.

## OTTO.

Father, yet thou hast not told them ;  
Clear I saw him in the moonlight,  
'Twas Sir Sintram who was there ;  
He who drew the gleaming dagger,  
Cut the lock from off his hair.  
And his comrade looked so fiendlike,  
That perchance 'tis truly whispered  
Sintram's heart is but a stone,  
And he's given to the devil,  
Who will claim him for his own.

**FISHERMAN.**

Silence, Otto ! Never utter  
Evil tales or idly listen

To their telling ; and this night  
Thou art foolish if thou thinkest.

We could see or hear aright.  
Wicked spirits, all deceiving,  
Human forms can take, contriving  
Deeds of darkness and of shame ;  
Now against our young lord plotting,  
Seek to sully his fair name.

**FISHERMAN'S WIFE.**

Son, an evil word thou spakest,  
Sintram's goodness all forgotten.

None than he hath softer heart,  
Of our pain and sorrow seeking  
On himself to take a part.

Oft he's come and sat for hours  
By thy brother, and sweet stories  
Told him and beguiled his pain.

OTTO.

God forgive me ! Never evil  
Will I think or speak again.

FISHERMAN.

Ah ! Sir Sintram, as I love him,  
Lowlier lot by far I'd wish him :  
    Riches, power, bloom of youth,  
All too often draw men downwards,  
    Blind them to the simplest truth ;  
Truths our children learn, and shining  
'Mid our poverty and toiling  
    Clear as day, are oft obscured  
'Mid their tangled lives and learning,  
    Ne'er in rest, of naught assured.  
Sintram then, with tempters round him,  
None to guide him in the darkness,  
    Stands in sorest need of prayer ;  
Let us kneeling here intrust him  
    To the Virgin Mother's care.  
    [ *They all kneel and pray before a small  
    shrine.* ]

SCENE III.—BIORN'S *Castle*. GABRIELLE'S  
*chamber*. FOLKO and GABRIELLE at  
*the window*. *Storm without*.

GABRIELLE.

Folko, tell me, shall we never  
See the bright sun in the heavens?  
Will the wind for evermore  
Moaning make, and raging waters  
Keep us storm-bound to this shore?  
Why so sudden hath the autumn,  
That was gentle, golden, radiant,  
Veiled in black her colours gay  
Since three days ago, when Sintram  
Rode at nightfall hence away?

FOLKO.

Strange it is, and all the stranger  
That no sign appeared of tempest  
On that evening sweet and calm,  
Then all suddenly resounded  
Storm-bells ringing in alarm.  
Yet perchance with change as sudden

As the angry driving torrents  
Came upon us will they cease,  
And before the iron winter  
There will come a time of peace  
[Enter SINTRAM, *his face deadly pale,*  
*his hair in wild disorder, and one*  
*long lock wanting.*]

## GABRIELLE.

God preserve us ! God have mercy !  
In the storm hath Sintram perished ;  
See his pallid spectre here.  
Yet with thee beside me, Folko,  
Even now I will not fear.

## FOLKO.

Gentle Gabrielle, take courage.  
'Tis no spectre here before us,  
'Tis Sir Sintram, the young knight ;  
Ah ! but in these evil hours  
Fallen into evil plight.  
[Leads SINTRAM to a shield-mirror.]  
Look upon this burnished metal,  
See thy features deadly pallid,

See thy hair in disarray ;  
Answer, by what strange adventure  
One long lock is cut away ?  
[SINTRAM *is silent.* FOLKO *leads him*  
*to the window.*]  
Look without and give me answer,  
Whence doth come this raging tempest ?  
Art thou dumb ?

GABRIELLE.

A dreadful fear  
Comes upon me we are prisoners,  
Bound by spells of witchcraft here.

FOLKO.

Many secret arts of darkness  
Linger in these northern mountains,  
Whence e'er yet are scarcely fled  
Thor and Odin, Frea, Loki,  
Demons worshipped, or the dead.  
Yet, sweet Gabrielle, be fearless ;  
Christ hath won for us our freedom.  
[To SINTRAM.] But to thee I say : Beware !

Know'st the proverb : Woe betide him  
Satan seizeth by the hair?

[SINTRAM *cries out as if struck, and  
falls moaning at FOLKO's feet.*]

SINTRAM.

Snatch my scarf from off my bosom,  
Pluck my sword from out the scabbard,  
Slay me here and end my shame ;  
For of knight I am not worthy,  
Nor of man to bear the name.

FOLKO.

Neither scarf from off thy bosom  
Will I snatch, nor from the scabbard  
Pluck thy sword, nor judge another.  
Is not he awhile that standeth  
E'en to him that falleth brother?  
Hasten, seek the healing balsam  
Given by celestial mercy,  
Given for the wounded heart.  
Grace thou hast, and life and power  
Yet to choose the better part.

[*He gently raises him. Exit SINTRAM  
weeping.*]

Sweet love, fear not. Now it seemeth  
Hath the storm wind lulled a little ;  
Listen ! In the corridor  
Good old Rolf is softly singing  
Words that ne'er I heard before.

ROLF [*sings without*].

Balder, the beauteous god of light, in vain  
His dark oncoming destiny would fly,  
And reach the blest Valhalla o'er the sky,  
Like those the bright Valkyrias from the  
slain  
Choose out, and, lifting from the reddened  
plain,  
Bear in their mighty arms to joys on high :  
For he was doomed ingloriously to die,  
And sink to Niflheim, ne'er to rise again.  
" 'Tis but an idle legend," wilt thou say ?  
Nay, rather doth not hidden sense appear,  
Lest we grow wanton in our little day  
Of strength and skill, and excellent array  
Of art and science, and forget to fear  
The day of sorrow and of death so near ?



## GABRIELLE.

Oh, my knight, my one protector !  
Back in crowds return my terrors,  
Shapes of horror darkly loom,  
Coming onward mortal dangers,  
Dread inevitable doom.

## FOLKO.

Gentle Gabrielle, sweet lady,  
Suffer not that seeming omens  
All thy strength with fear benumb ;  
Christ hath made the arch-foe silent,  
And the oracles are dumb.  
Dreams and omens, dread forebodings,  
Dismal fears of ills impending,  
Men the envious demon's sport,  
Snared, entrapped, and helpless victims  
Unto utter ruin brought :  
These most fell imaginations,  
Heavy yoke of superstition,  
Burdens of the slaves of night,  
From us far, oh ! let us cast them,  
We the children of the light.

Rolf hath right well sung and wisely ;  
Ever we are travelling forward,  
    Ever death and sorrows nearing ;  
Sometimes they may cast their shadows  
    Forward on us ere appearing.  
But, my sweet love, heart the dearest,  
Whether sorrows come all sudden,  
    Or foreseen from long before ;  
Whether singly or in numbers,  
    Pressing on us more and more :  
Secret joy within ne'er fails us,  
Trustful love doth e'er sustain us,  
    Sweetly soothes the sharpest pain.  
Hark ! the aged minstrel's music  
    Through the arches sounds again.

ROLF [*sings*].

The vast unnumbered lamps in heaven's hall  
Amaze us, and their orbits, wisely planned ;  
    Yet God doth hold them all within His hand ;  
And nowhere falleth speck of dust so small  
The All-Seeing doth not see, and will its fall ;  
    Who counteth every grain of yellow sand,

Each wave that e'er hath dashed against the  
land ;  
What hath been, will be, might be, knoweth all.  
Oh, wherefore then should care oppress us still,  
And dread forebodings ? For except God's  
wrath,  
Naught else have we to fear, nor any ill ;  
This one wise fear doth cast all others forth ;  
Naught is, but He permits it, or must cease  
To be ; and in His will is all our peace.

SCENE IV.—*Snowy summit. Precipices on all  
sides. FOLKO stands in hunting dress and  
snow-shoes.*

FOLKO.

Almost glad the bear-hunt makes me  
That the wild portentous autumn  
Hindered us from setting forth,  
Kept me for this winter season,  
For brave pastimes of the North.

[*Enter SINTRAM.*]

Welcome, comrade ! By good fortune  
On this mound, his last entrenchment,  
Crouching on the topmost snow,

Hear the bear I found and slew him,  
But in dying he fell below.  
Quickly I would downward follow,  
Head and claws to take as trophies,  
Victory's crown for Gabrielle ;  
Only tell me, will this snow-skate  
Still hold fast and bear me well ?

SINTRAM.

Nay, Sir Folko, let me swiftly  
Sliding down bring back thy trophies.

FOLKO.

Of true knight it is not told,  
That he leaves his work unfinished :  
Answer, will this foot-gear hold ?

[SINTRAM stoops down and examines  
FOLKO'S snow-skate. Enter unseen  
the LITTLE MASTER.]

LITTLE MASTER.

Aye, of course, 'tis right as can be.

[FOLKO skates instantly down the slope  
and disappears. Presently a cry is  
heard of one falling.]

Right enough, and rightly broken  
Is the hero's neck ; so now  
Hasten back to happy Helen,  
Freed at last from marriage vow.  
She is longing for your coming,  
Well ye know she loves you dearly,  
Only Menelaus stood  
Right across her path and hindered  
Love from hastening where it would.

FOLKO [*from below*].

Comrade, help me ; I am wounded,  
Yet may live.

SINTRAM.

I come, I hear thee.

LITTLE MASTER.

Stay, he's quite past help, I know ;  
Gabrielle is waiting for you,  
Gabrielle is all aglow.  
See her cheeks like fairest roses  
All for you, and hands of ivory  
Beckoning your quick return ;

Keep no more two loves asunder,  
Flames that none can quench must burn.  
[*He whispers in SINTRAM'S ear, and  
both hasten away, while FOLKO'S  
voice is heard.*]

FOLKO.

Sintram, knight ! Oh, come to help me,  
Thou who bearest sword of honour,  
Scarf of noble deeds the token ;  
With her young the she-bear creepeth .  
Near me, and mine arm is broken.

SCENE V.—*Path down the mountain. SIN-  
TRAM and the LITTLE MASTER are hurry-  
ing past.*

LITTLE MASTER.

Mistress she-bear, masters young bears,  
Ha ! a dainty meal ye're making ;  
Him ye rend and him devour  
Who was Islam's scourge and terror ;  
Fill yourselves this merry hour.  
Ha ! my fine most Christian hero,

F

All is ended, and from henceforth  
Need no Moorish maidens sigh ;  
Never wilt thou more in battle  
"Mountjoy and Saint Denis" cry——  
Ah ! Ah !

*[Writhing in pain and terror, the  
LITTLE MASTER creeps away and  
disappears. SINTRAM stops asto-  
nished. After a long pause exclaims]*

## SINTRAM.

Am I waking ? am I dreaming ?  
He whose words had led me captive,  
Kindled in me passion's flame,  
Flees in terror that he uttered  
Holy war-cry, saintly name !  
This foul coward ne'er my master  
More ! But ah ! there grasp me throttling,  
So that scarce I draw my breath,  
Dread, remorse, despair, and horror ;  
For 'tis mine the deed of death.  
Cliffs of ice, why stand ye steadfast ?  
Close upon me, crush me quickly,  
Let the earth asunder burst,

And a yawning gulf devour  
Traitor evermore accursed.

[*A bell for prayer sounds from a distant  
hermitage.*]

Ah ! that sound, to prayer the summons.

Long ago—O mother ! mother !

Dost thou hear me?—whilst my head

On thy lap I laid, didst bid me

Love and trust—but thou art dead.

[*Weeps bitterly awhile, then starts up.*]

Dead no more, but ever watching,

And our God this hour imploring

Pardon e'en to me to give ;

And a voice doth seem to whisper,

Noble Folko yet doth live.

[*Hastens backward.*]

SCENE VI.—*Gorge in the mountains.* FOLKO  
*sitting pale and bleeding, one arm broken.*  
SINTRAM *draws near.*

FOLKO.

Through the she-bear passed thy weapon ;  
Of her mate, I pray thee, fetch me



Head and claws, that I may show  
These to Gabrielle, my promised  
Trophies from the pathless snow.

*[Exit SINTRAM, and presently returns  
with the claws and head of the  
he-bear.]*

Thanks I render for thy service.  
See these wounds, they still are bleeding ;  
Staunch them, and my broken arm  
Set in rough-made splints, and homeward  
Then canst lead me without harm.

*[SINTRAM binds up his wounds and his  
broken arm.]*

SINTRAM.

Oh, may God on me have mercy !  
Scarce I dare one word to utter,  
Or to look you in the face ;  
Not with aught that's good or noble,  
But with wickedness my place.

FOLKO.

Truly on an evil highway  
Hadst thou once more started forward

Purpose good all broken down ;  
Yet our utmost strength is frailty,  
None can win himself his crown.  
And if all our tears availed not,  
Naught the dreadful debt could cancel,  
In what heart could hope endure ?  
Lead me, Sintram ; hold me firmly,  
For my steps are little sure.  
Lead me homeward, my deliverer ;  
Truly thou my life hast rescued.  
Gabrielle shall know this day,  
Had thy spear not struck the she-bear,  
I had fallen as her prey.  
[SINTRAM leads him away slowly.]

SCENE VII.—BIORN'S *Castle courtyard*. BIORN,  
FOLKO (*his arm in a sling*), GABRIELLE  
*and her ladies*, ROLF, *Norse and Norman*  
*soldiers*.

NORSEMEN.

Honour to the glorious hero,  
First in every kind of combat,  
Even 'mid our northern snows ;  
Though a dweller in the Southland,

All in our northern arts he knows,  
He hath slain wild beast the mightiest,  
Scaled the mountain heights the steepest,  
On our snow-skates sped along  
Swifter than the swiftest Norseman,  
Passing all our youthful throng.  
Honour to the fairest lady  
That our rough land e'er hath trodden,  
Worthy of her valiant knight,  
Sweetest singer, sweet inspirer  
Of all noble deeds and right.

## FOLKO.

Warriors, well ye sound the praises  
Of fair Gabrielle, my lady,  
And I thank you ; but mine own  
All too loud, as tho' were owing  
Triumphs all to me alone.  
Any skill that is my portion  
In your northern sports, I learnt it  
Under Ulf in Norway's land ;  
And that living now ye see me,  
Thanks it is to Sintram's hand.  
Close had come the savage she-bear,

Almost clutched me, when all sudden  
Struck her dead his well-thrown spear.  
See, here cometh my deliverer ;  
Greet him with a ringing cheer.

*[Enter SINTRAM, whom the Normans  
first, and then the Norsemen greet  
with cheers. He covers his face with  
his hands in shame.]*

SINTRAM.

If ye knew who stood before you,  
Could have seen into the hollow  
Where your noble leader lay,  
All your spears had pierced my body  
Ere a word I more could say.  
Something must I tell, not all things,  
Lest my father's heart be broken ;  
Know then, Normans—

FOLKO.

Silence keep ;

Ill beseemeth here to publish  
Idle dreams of feverish sleep.

*[A pause. Then at last SINTRAM speaks  
with set features and solemn voice.]*

## SINTRAM.

At other times, Sir Folko, your part the word to  
say,

And mine to make no answer, and only to obey.  
But now for once I speak, and then long silence  
keep ;

The floodgates now are open, deep speaketh  
unto deep.

This much to you, my comrades, and you, my  
Norman guests,

'Tis right that I should tell, brave hearts in  
honest breasts :

My heart is full of evil, my life is full of shame,  
I am no longer worthy to bear a noble name,  
Nor worthy more beneath one roof with stain-  
less knight

To dwell, nor more appear in spotless lady's sight.  
Farewell ! I leave you now, and to the mount of  
stone,

The storm-beat Moonrock castle, I go to dwell  
alone.

[*Sadly.*] My father, I must leave thee, the hour  
has come at last ;

No more I must be to thee than shadow of the  
past,  
Nor hither come again till death doth ring a  
knell—  
[*Dreamily.*] The sound from far away e'en now  
I hear. Farewell !

BIORN.

Do thy will, my son, unhindered,  
Nothing will I set against it,  
Nor thy words will seek to solve ;  
For the dreadful fear doth hold me  
Thou art right in thy resolve.  
[*Exeunt SINTRAM and ROLF.*]

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Outside the Moonrock Castle. Spring-time. Midnight. SINTRAM paces to and fro by the edge of the moat.*

SINTRAM.

How mild the night, the soft spring breezes blow,  
The silent drops of gentle rain descend,  
And every fragrant little plant doth know  
That winter's iron reign hath reached its end.  
Soon all the lowland fields will be aglow  
With hundred flowers that harmonious blend  
Their varied colours, and, as if to show  
Humility, their bright heads ever bend.

Hath spring returned for me? Ah, no! not yet.  
For flowers of virtue, ah! I seek in vain.  
My will on evil, ah! so oft is set,  
My heart with passion, ah! is torn in twain.

Oh, when will break the meshes of this net  
That clings around me? When shall I amain  
Begin with burning tears to pay my debt?  
When shall I learn to act and to refrain?

I seek the night air, for I scarcely sleep,  
But forthwith evil visions come from hell,  
And the enchantress Venus bids me weep  
No more, but follow the wise master well,  
Who can bring Gabrielle to this strong keep,  
Where for long years we may securely dwell ;  
And fierce desires like beasts upon me leap,  
Till I am nigh my weary soul to sell.

And in a mirror, then, as bright and fair  
As ever was Knight Paris, I appear,  
And Gabrielle o'er me her golden hair  
Lets fall, and whispers sweet words in mine  
ear.

But yet within me something says : Beware !  
And that enchantress standing by me near  
Seems a strange likeness to the dwarf to bear  
Who haunts me, and my bones are filled with  
fear.



One comfort yet is left, the sword to hold  
That Gabrielle bestowed and scarf of blue ;  
And as a sorrowing child is soothed when told  
Some wondrous tale, for me the story true  
Of Niflung's heath, the strife of warriors bold,  
And the strange foeman whom at last I slew,  
Bring consolation, and is writ in gold  
Upon my heart the joy that day I knew.

LITTLE MASTER [*from below*].

Ha ! ha ! ha !

SINTRAM.

What this sound of mocking laughter,—  
Laughter half with groaning mingled ?  
Muffled in strange robes doth creep  
Figure small, and scarcely able  
Up to mount the slope so steep.

[*The LITTLE MASTER is seen at the edge of  
the moat.*]

For what purpose here at night-time ?  
Why thy moaning and thy laughter ?  
Tell thy name and show thy face.

## LITTLE MASTER.

Finely asked and finely ordered !

Manners yours a prince would grace.

In mine own turn, I might ask you

Why ye sigh and moan and wander

By the moat at midnight hour ?

Why ye look so pale and downcast

When such joy is in your power ?

But as friends we must not wrangle ;

In the moat, dark, damp, unwholesome,

'Tis but natural I did groan ;

And my laughter—the occasion,

Words of yours indeed I own.

Grand your valour in that combat

Sword and scarf reward befitting ;

Yet whom think ye then was slain ?

The dead warrior, ye remember,

How ye sought him all in vain.

E'en myself was that dead warrior,

E'en myself that scared the searchers ;

I, the wondrous valiant stranger,

Played my part for your advancement,

Triumph gave you free from danger.

Doubt ye yet?—Then gaze and see me,  
[*He throws off his robes and appears as a  
small knight in strange armour.*]

The same warrior that in fancy  
On the heath ye overthrew.  
Look not all so sad and downcast,  
Be assured 'tis nothing new.  
Nothing new, for reputation,  
If ye'll only scan it closely,  
Fraud and fiction will appear.  
Take life as ye find it, comrade ;  
Never scrutinise too near.  
Never man, and still less woman,  
Can endure a light too searching ;  
All is bubble, froth, and spray  
In this world ; the wise they gather  
What they like that comes their way.  
Gabrielle your way she cometh ;  
Is your sweet love, deigns to give you  
Silken scarf and iron sword ;  
But for heart that burns and suffers  
These are but a poor reward.  
And to-morrow Menelaus  
Sails and bears away sweet Helen ;



Paris ne'er will see her more,

[*Pauses. Then in a whisper*]

Ne'er—unless amends he maketh

For the chances missed before.

[*Pulls away some grass and brush-wood by a rock, and shows in it a small iron door, that flies open at his touch.*]

Look ! a secret passage opens

Underground for forty furlongs,

Leading to the very room

Where sweet Gabrielle doth slumber,

Fresh like rose begun to bloom.

And the thorns—Duke Menelaus—

I have smoothed with magic potion ;

Deep in heavy sleep he lies :

Reach the castle in two hours,

In two more bring back your prize.

None will know her place of refuge ;

If they knew, 'twould little matter,

For this rock can ne'er be taken,

Nor with friend of mine the warden

Is there risk of being forsaken.

[*Whispers in SINTRAM'S ear.*]

SINTRAM [*dreamily*].

Art thou Venus the enchantress?

LITTLE MASTER.

Part I am, or rather Venus

Is a part of me ; and know

If ye beauteous grew as Paris,

Beauteous I should also grow.

[*ROLF appears on the ramparts above  
with a lantern.*]

ROLF [*from above*].

In God's name, Sir Sintram, wherefore

Hideous ghost around you hovers

Of the warrior who was slain

By your spear on Niflung's heather,

And whose corpse was sought in vain?

LITTLE MASTER.

What I said, up there repeateth

And confirms the pious squire.

Quickly follow through this door.

SINTRAM.

Get thee gone, thou restless tempter ;  
Part in me shalt have no more.

[*The LITTLE MASTER runs into the  
secret passage, and slams the door  
furiously. Enter ROLF.*]

Ah ! my Rolf, all past and over  
Is my greatest consolation,  
Yet my hope remaineth still.

ROLF.

Yours perchance the noblest calling,  
Unconsoled to do God's will.

SCENE II.—*Convent at Drontheim. The parlour.*

SINTRAM *conversing with* THORA.

SINTRAM.

Fourteen winters' snows have fallen  
Since we parted, dearest sister ;  
Yet the day I well recall,  
How we wept and clung together,  
Standing in the castle hall.

Ah ! how much I longed to follow,  
Longed to mount the lofty vessel  
That was anchored in the bay,  
And my heart was nigh to bursting  
As the white sails sped away.  
And my waking on the morrow  
I remember, sad and lonely,  
Murm'ring thine and Astrid's name ;  
Then how scarce had time brought  
healing,  
When a heavier sorrow came.  
Deadly still lay dearest mother,  
Silent that sweet voice for ever,  
Closed those kindly beaming eyes,  
Cold as ice that heart so loving,  
All laid low no more to rise.

[ *Weeps.* ]

THORA.

Happy those who die, 'tis written,  
In the Lord, their life and gladness.  
Weep not ; for our mother's death  
Is her crown, and for her children  
Every hour lighteneth.

## SINTRAM.

Ah ! my Thora, happy girlhood  
Thou hast passed amid the meadows  
    In the land of France the fair ;  
Now the better part hast chosen,  
    Wondrous life of constant prayer.  
Astrid, too, as thou hast told me,  
Wedded to a Norman chieftain  
    Of the island in the West,  
Happy bride of noble bridegroom,  
    She, too, seemeth to be blest.  
But for me, oh ! where the blessing ?  
Where the life of joy or goodness ?  
    All is darkness, sorrow, sin ;  
Stony castle on the Moonrock  
    Holds a stony heart within.  
“ Look without,” I hear thee tell me,  
“ Comfort take in others’ gladness.”  
    Out I look upon the world ;  
Men I see in wild confusion,  
    Hither, thither, blindly hurled ;  
Striving each his part in pleasure  
Quick to snatch before another  
    Comes and bears the prize away ;



Wickedness triumphant making  
Of the innocent a prey.  
And appears a sight appalling,  
Men the slaves of every passion,  
Anger, envy, pride, and lust,  
Like a brood of serpents struggling,  
Hissing, writhing in the dust.  
Where is peace and where is order?  
Where are hearts all true and guileless?  
Who around can see the sign  
That the life of each and all men  
Is the work of hand divine?

## THORA.

Brother, to my heart the dearest,  
Little skill I have to reason  
Over problems of our life ;  
Little strength to give to others  
In the supernatural strife.  
Yet I pray thee, brother, hear me,  
Though beforehand all thou knowest  
That I tell, but for awhile  
Hast forgotten, and hast listened  
To the fell seducer's guile.

On the surface thou hast rested,  
Not beheld the depths of wisdom,  
    Only noise and tumult heard,  
Not the gentler sounds melodious,  
    Not the inner silent word.  
Evil soundeth, evil shouteth,  
Flaunting thro' the streets and markets :  
    Good doth walk in hidden ways,  
And with flowers of fragrant virtues  
    Earth in fairest robe arrays.  
Truly dread confusion seemeth  
All around to rage ; but battles  
    E'er to one who doth not know  
All the skilful ordered movements,  
    Wild disorder seem to show.  
And the great world that surrounds us,  
And the small world claspt within us,  
    Both are scenes of strife unending ;  
Two the loves and two the cities  
    Ever for men's hearts contending.  
Love of self in earthly city  
E'en to scorn of God upriseth ;  
    But God's city that we call,  
E'en to scorn of self exalteth

Love of God her all in all.  
These the cities ever waging  
War inexpiable, truceless,  
War with utmost ends at stake.  
Brother, in this mighty combat  
Thine allotted portion take.  
Wouldst thou further ask, complaining,  
Wherefore any combat rages,  
Wherefore any sink and fall,  
While omnipotent God ruleth,  
Maker He and Lord of all?  
'Tis to ask a childish question,  
'Tis to stretch our childish fingers  
Infinite expanse to clasp ;  
'Tis to think that narrow reason  
Boundless being and love can grasp.  
But our guesses not confounding  
With the truth, and lowly bending  
Down our heads, we yet may say :  
If no evil, if no battle,  
If no barriers in our way,  
Where would shine the sun of justice ?  
Where would be the victory glorious ?  
Where her face would Mercy show ?

How had Christ from heaven descended,  
    Seeking out the stole of woe ?  
Seeking, finding priceless treasure,  
Sinless, stricken down to suffer.  
    Ah ! how great had been the loss  
If no place for tears of sorrow,  
    For the lovers of the cross.

## SINTRAM.

Sister, in my soul thou wakenest  
Memories of days departed,  
    Sounds of sweet and soothing voice,  
Bidding me in darkest hour  
    Comfort take and still rejoice ;  
Telling of the sinless mother,  
All her heart with sorrow riven,  
    Evermore a refuge sure,  
And the teacher of her children  
    How to suffer and endure.  
I must leave thee now, but often  
From mine iron-gated castle  
    Hither let my footsteps turn ;  
Here in light amidst the darkness,  
    As a child to sit and learn.

SCENE III.—*Biorn's Castle. The great hall.  
A banquet. BIORN, ASTOLFO, and many  
Knights seated at the table. Attendants.*

BIORN.

Wilt thou watch the ancient ritual,  
When, the boar's-head goblet grasping,  
Vows we utter and requests?  
Then the overflowing goblet  
Passes round to all the guests.  
Each returning joyous Yule-tide  
Sees us faithful to this custom;  
Only once 'twas broken through,  
And the cup away was hidden  
From monk Folko and his crew.  
But I fear that with thy learning,  
For thy fame hath travelled hither,  
Thou may'st deem our Northern ways  
Wisdom lacking and refinement,  
Rude and rugged as our lays.

ASTOLFO.

O Sir Biorn, knights and singers,  
Humbly pardon must I ask you,

If from any words of mine  
Ye have thought of me I loved not  
Prayers and vows and rites divine.  
Ah ! how much ye do mistake me :  
All the ways of old delight me,  
Ancient customs to explore,  
Simple legends hear repeated,  
Solemn rituals to restore.  
Poor and dull would life be truly,  
Lacking noblest crown of culture,  
Did we make religion dumb ;  
Let all forms of beauteous worship  
With their priests most welcome come.  
Wondrous is our being and complex,  
That we need our every portion  
Should its proper food receive ;  
Faculties we have of worship,  
Aspirations to believe.  
Train these faculties, and nourish  
Sweet religious aspirations  
As ye train your other powers,  
That your lives be all harmonious,  
And your ways be strewn with  
flowers.

Thus the wise men of the ancients  
Consecrated their emotions,  
O'er their loves sweet Venus reigned,  
Bacchus gladsome made their feastings,  
Cravings each their god obtained.  
Gods and goddesses abounding  
Mingled joyously with mortals ;  
While who loved the cloud-capped  
heights  
Found a charm in awestruck worship,  
Vast abysses, endless nights :  
E'en for these were Fates unbending,  
Bolts of Jove, wheel-bound Ixion,  
Nemesis that none could stay.  
Bring the boar's-head out, my comrades,  
Much I have to vow and pray.  
And to prove my dispositions,  
One more word ye'll let me utter,  
Though of blame it is a word :  
Priest within this noble castle  
None ye suffer, so I've heard.  
O ye Norsemen, all so earnest,  
All so narrow, not perceiving  
For all things there is a place :

Keep the good old festive custom :

Ask the priest to say the grace.

Juxtapose the priest and boar's-head ;

Be wide-minded, and supposing

One his flesh would mortify,

Sacerdotal ways would follow,

Hinder not that he should try.

'Tis a part of life's great fulness

That not few should have such cravings.

But, my comrades, we are free,

Holding human joy and friendship

Noblest worship far to be.

Bending not our knees, nor raising

Piteous cries for help, but holding

Better part that each should say :

I myself enthroned as sovereign,

Inward judge alone obey.

Free we live from forward looking

To a dread and vengeful judgment ;

Free from sense of shame and sin,

Fearless in our world enlightened,

Free without and free within.

Let us then the ancient custom

Gladly, reverently follow ;



Let them bring the golden boar.  
Nay, e'en now they surely bring it,  
Slowly openeth the door.

*[The figure of DEATH appears at the  
door, but is seen only by ASTOLF  
who stares in horror.]*

BIORN.

Nay, 'tis shut ; the golden boar's-head  
In this hall for ever stayeth,  
Guarded in yon iron chest.  
But why gaze upon the doorway  
As though entered some strange guest ?

A GUEST.

Sudden sickness must have seized him :  
Hold him, or he falleth downward

A SECOND GUEST.

Send for a physician.

A THIRD GUEST.

Seek

Quick the chaplain.

## DISCIPLE OF ASTOLFO.

Press not round him.

Master, look upon me, speak.

[ASTOLFO *keeps gazing horror-stricken at the door. His disciple clings to him. The guests look on spell-bound. From the doorway DEATH speaks, and is heard only by ASTOLFO, his words being to the rest as the moaning of a sudden wind.*]

## DEATH.

Come forth, thou wretched soul ; thine hour of  
grace is past,

Thine hour of triumph o'er, the reckoning come  
at last.

In vain a thousand times a gentle voice hath  
called :

“O come and be my child, no more by sin  
enthralled.”

In vain thy father pleaded, in vain a mother's  
voice

Implored thy froward heart to leave its evil  
choice ;

In vain a thousand warnings were sounded in  
thine ear

To fear the living God and leave all other fear.  
But thou hast sought thyself, and ah ! thyself  
hast found,

Now to thyself alone for ever to be bound.  
As thou hast been, still be, unchanged for  
evermore,

Thine heart with every good in everlasting war.  
And as thou hast on earth, while boasting to be  
free,

Served as the slave of sin, blown like an aspen-tree  
By blast of open passion or gust of secret pride,  
Man's privilege of strife ignobly cast aside,  
A slave thou shalt remain, by self-love rent and  
torn,

And ever wear the chains that thou on earth  
hast worn.

Thy tree hath fallen now, must lie as it doth fall.  
God hast thou lost, and thus hast lost thine all  
in all.

The Bridegroom hath passed in, closed is the  
heavenly gate ;

Wisest thou at last, but ah ! too late, too late.

Come forth, and leave thy friends ; all friendship  
now is o'er,

No voice of happy welcome to hear for evermore,  
And light and joy no more, nor loving heart to  
know :

Come forth to endless darkness, come forth to  
endless woe.

[ASTOLFO *sinks back dead in his chair.*]

THIRD GUEST.

Good God ! he's dead, and all unready gone  
To meet his great Creator, e'en with word  
Of mockery on his lips. Here shall we stay  
Till God's just vengeance strike yet once again  
This impious festival. Oh, let's away !

[*All the guests hurry away, leaving  
BIORN standing alone.*]

BIORN.

All have hastened forth in terror ;  
Lingered last his fond disciple,  
Then appalled in anguish fled.  
But for me, I'll stay undaunted  
All alone beside the dead.

[*Enter* LITTLE MASTER.]

## LITTLE MASTER.

Not alone, for let me bear thee  
Company as friend familiar ;  
Nor think here applies the saying :  
" Company makes two, not three," where  
Number three is quite past praying.

## BIORN.

Ah ! my friend, at all times ready  
With thy laughter and thy jesting,  
Take thy seat, and let us twain  
Fill with wine the cup neglected,  
Drink and fill it full again.  
*[Brings out the boar's-head cup and  
fills it.]*

## LITTLE MASTER.

Noble lord, thou art forgetting  
Duties due to guests. The stranger  
Sitting there talks not : no matter ;  
Drink he wants ; the sow that's silent  
Supps the most and makes no chatter.  
Let us prop him up. He promised

He would drink from out the boar's-head ;  
Suffer not he break his word.  
Truth, thou know'st, I love it fondly ;  
So did he, from what I've heard.

[*They prop up the corpse of ASTOLFO  
and pour wine from the boar's-head  
down the throat. Then the LITTLE  
MASTER pushes the corpse, and it  
falls on the floor.*]

Fie ! he's drunk, and stand he cannot.  
Here a question nice arises ;  
Drink he swore he would : a liar  
Thus must be, or else a drunkard ;  
Which is right, may I inquire ?

[*BIORN laughs boisterously.*]

*Absolvatur*, for by no means  
Was his soul drunk, and his body  
Ne'er did swear ; so let's sit down,  
And I'll tell a pretty story  
Of an abbess, monk, and clown.  
[*They sit down, drink, laugh, and  
whisper together.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Fisherman's Cottage.* RURI  
*on his sick-bed, ULRICA sitting beside him.*

ULRICA.

My wedding nosegay lacks a flower ;  
To-morrow brings not perfect joy.  
Oh, would I had a fairy's power,  
And with my wand I'd touch thy brow,  
And make thee well this very hour,  
And, when the music bade us dance,  
The gayest dancer thou would'st be,  
And singer none would dare advance  
To be thy rival, for thy notes  
Would e'en the nightingale entrance.  
[*Kisses him and weeps.*]

RURIC.

Thou dearest, foolish sister mine,  
How often would'st thou have me say  
Thou must for my sake ne'er repine ?  
But let to-morrow's golden sun  
Upon thy joy unsullied shine.  
And if I dance not in thy sight,  
Nor raise my voice in outward song,

A merry festival and bright  
I'll keep within, and dance and leap,  
In spirit sharing thy delight.  
And here as judge I'll sit in state,  
And if thy Guthred please thee not,  
A judgment stern shall him await  
In this my court. Nay, bring him now ;  
I hear his footsteps at the gate.

[*Exit ULRICA. RURIC groans and  
shows signs of great pain.*]

My God, Thy sweetest will be ever done !  
Oh, welcome cross, that brings me close to  
Thee !

But yet in mercy this one favour give,  
That the bright morrow's joy I may not  
mar,

And for their sake e'en yet awhile may live.

[*Enter ULRICA and GUTHRED. RURIC  
greets them with a smile.*]

You bring him here within my reach,  
But ah ! so good that I forget  
The sermon I had meant to preach,—  
The husband's duty to submit,  
And learn whate'er the wife may teach.



## GUTHRED.

It gives me joy to see thee gay,  
To see thee smile ; and I would hear  
Thy sermon gladly, but to-day  
A nobler visitor hath come,  
Sir Sintram, so we must not stay.

[*Exeunt* ULRICA and GUTHRED. *Enter*  
SINTRAM.]

## SINTRAM.

Ah ! Ruric, on my homeward ride  
I met thy father, and he said  
I should be welcome at thy side,  
And that to-morrow's joyous morn  
Will see thy sister Guthred's bride.

[*Takes his seat beside the bed of RURI  
smoothes his pillow, shades his eyes*

## RURIC.

Sir Sintram, suffer that my smile  
May tell my welcome, for my words  
Just now are scanty—wait awhile

[*He gasps for breath*

And I will speak. How good ye are  
My lingering sickness to beguile.

*[A pause. Then SINTRAM begins speaking to himself in a voice low at first and then louder.]*

SINTRAM.

He called me good ! Are all men liars ?

It was not goodness brought me here ;  
My heart is hot with evil fires,  
And I am driven to obey  
The rule of passionate desires.

'Tis noonday, yet the sun's bright seat  
Is dark as night ; the solid earth  
Doth open wide beneath my feet,  
And hundred hellish voices sound  
Another reprobate to greet.

For friends no more I care, nor kin ;  
Naught brings me joy, and I would leap  
Into the gulf of every sin,  
But that some power holds me back,  
Some voice I cannot hush within.

And thus each day I'm torn in twain,  
And cannot more endure, and come  
To witness here the hopeless pain  
Another helpless victim bears :  
Is this the world where God doth reign ?

RURIC [*with energy*].

Stay, stay those words with evil freight  
All heavy laden ; they are his  
Who darkens all our soul with hate,  
A veil o'erspreading lest we see  
The light and love that round us wait.

Ah ! Sintram, when the sentence dread  
We heard, my sickness e'en in death  
Must surely end, and hope had fled,  
And poverty pressed on us sore,  
And bitter tears my mother shed :

The chaplain spoke on bended knee :  
"The stricken soul God loveth most ;  
And be not downcast ; is not He  
The joy of heaven and your joy,  
Who hung for you upon the tree ?

He loves in sorrowing hearts to reign ;  
And who is poor possessing Him ?  
And by His heavenly touch our pain  
Becomes a sweet o'erflowing spring  
Of endless good, unmeasured gain.

Thy faltering voice shall intercede,  
Thine helpless hands shall blessings bring  
On dearest friend or greatest need,  
On father, mother, brethren all,  
And all for whom thine heart doth bleed."

And thus he made me gladly greet  
The sharpest pangs as golden gifts.  
How good is God to me ! How sweet  
He makes my path, and bids me tread  
Where trod before His wounded feet.

[*After a pause.*] But pardon that your ears I fill  
With talking of myself ; had I  
But half your sorrows, I should ill  
Endure them—but a faintness comes—  
Awhile I needs—must lie me still.

[*He sinks back on the bed panting.*  
SINTRAM holds his hand awhile,  
then rises and goes to the window.]

SINTRAM [*aside*].

Is knighthood mine? His face grew dark  
A moment with o'er-mastering pain,  
Yet no complaining word.—But hark !  
What song is this I hear without,  
Like sweetest note of soaring lark ?

RURIC [*faintly*].

My little sister from the croft  
Returning, to my casement comes  
And sings the song I sang so oft,  
Our cattle driving joyously  
To summer pastures far aloft.  
[ULLA *appears before the window and sing*

ULLA.

The winter is over, the south wind is blowin  
The streamlets are leaping, the rivers a  
flowing,  
The lads and the lasses all merry are going  
Aloft to the meadows on high.  
See, now they have come to the edge of tl  
snow

Where freshest and sweetest the green grass  
doth grow,  
And the gentian her blue head the brightest doth  
show,

The nearer the arch of the sky.  
And the bells of the cattle they tingle so clear,  
That down on the fiord the shipmate can hear,  
And longs as he thinks of a heart that is dear :  
Oh, would that to thee I could fly !

SCENE V.—*Moonrock Castle. The WARDEN  
lying on his sick-bed, a Priest, the CHAPLAIN,  
by his side. Enter SINTRAM. The CHAP-  
LAIN rises.*

CHAPLAIN.

Enter softly ; here, Sir Sintram,  
Sit beside the dying man's pillow ;  
Welcome glisteneth in his eyes.  
He awaits you, and his story  
Longs to tell you ere he dies.

[*Exit CHAPLAIN. SINTRAM sits by the  
WARDEN, who speaks slowly and  
solemnly.*]

## THE WARDEN.

Sir Sintram, hear me. Ah ! long years ago  
A boy in blithesome innocence was I,  
Unknown the dismal path of sin and woe,  
First in adventure, nor was cliff so high  
But I could scale it all along our shore,  
And well each truth of holy faith I knew.  
Then other teachers came, and friends no more  
Like those of old, and a new being I grew.  
I listened in my folly, heard them say  
All ended with life's end and naught was known  
Beyond ; and how the wise man every day  
All pleasant things of life should make his own  
And pluck with joy each flower. What they said  
But half believing, yet I wholly fell,  
Till wearied once of wickedness, I fled  
Along the cliff-path that I knew so well.  
The sweet still evening came, and all the air  
Was full of perfume from the flowers that grew  
So thick around, and sight I saw so fair :  
The sun, ere sinking in a mist of blue,  
Spread a broad belt of gently rippling gold  
O'er the white waters of the western sea.

I gazed, and felt within my heart grow cold,  
For beauty's source and home was not for  
me.

Then turning back, in books profound I sought  
To still the pain that ever gnawed my breast,  
And wandering weary thro' the fields of thought  
To seek a place wherein my soul to rest.

Renown I won and wealth ; and yet the weal  
I sought for came not ; but within the cry :  
It needs but one small piece of pointed steel,  
And lo ! the lore thou hast is all gone by.

Then, angry at my helplessness, once more  
I plunged in vice and cast aside the name  
Of honour, wisdom, virtue that I bore,  
And as a cynic gloried in my shame.

But even thus I could not still the voice  
That whispered truth and substance were  
divine,

All else false fleeting shadows, and the choice  
Of life eternal or of death was mine.

But yet I would not listen, and each day  
In guilt grew bolder, till at last I slew  
Some rival, and from justice fled away.

The ship was driven by a wind that blew



With fury from the west upon this land ;  
Alone of shipmates all I reached the shore,  
Cast 'mid two rocks upon a strip of sand,  
I that of all on life the least set store.  
Two fisher-lads came by, bore me with care  
Up to their father's hut, and there I lay,  
While those poor cottagers did nothing spare  
Of their scant substance, watching night and  
day,  
All thro' my sickness, offering many a prayer  
For me who had forgotten how to pray,  
And only passed from sickness to despair,  
Longing for death, but dreading the dark way.  
They led me to Sir Biorn ; him I told  
Of my past life some portion ; quick he saw  
In me a spirit desperate and bold,  
Not conscience, but his will to be my law.  
The warden of the Moonrock dungeon fell  
He made me, ready any deed to dare.  
For years I worked his will but all too well,  
And each year heavier grew my load of  
care.  
Then out I drew my sword to take away  
My life, when lo ! I heard the passing bell

That bids the hearer for a dying man pray.

I stayed my hand, and on my knees I fell,  
That had not knelt for years, and the old prayer  
Once more my lips did utter, and once more  
Came hope that I might yet redemption share,  
Came will to bend my proud head and adore.  
I vowed to God the remnant of my life,

To use against His foes my every breath ;  
But, lest I should turn back from this new strife,  
God's mercy sent this sickness unto death.

And in my troubled sleep I dreamt a dream,  
That Ruric, clad in robes all glittering bright,  
Led a veiled figure, that like mine did seem,  
Before the mercy-throne on heaven's height ;  
Whence came a voice : " Thy prayer of pain is  
heard."

I woke, and asked for whom a funeral-knell  
Was tolling, and they went and brought me  
word ;

'Twas for a fisherman beyond the dell,  
Long sick, of no account. Yet his the deed  
And his the prayer that raised my soul again.

*[He gasps for breath, and then, after a pause,  
continues very faintly and slowly.]*

God grant thee one who for thine hour of need  
Will pray in sickness, poverty, and pain.

SINTRAM.

Ah ! his voice and strength have failed him ;  
Life away is ebbing quickly,  
Feet and hands grow deadly cold.

[*Calls at the door.*] Let the chaplain hasten  
hither,

And the passing bell be tolled.

[*Enter the CHAPLAIN and ROLF. All kneel  
round the dying man. Presently the  
passing bell is heard, and the CHAPLAIN  
begins the "Commendatio animæ."*]

CHAPLAIN.

To God Almighty I commend thy soul,  
To Him who did create thee, dearest brother,  
That, when our nature's debt thou shalt have  
paid

And sunk in death, then surely in His arms  
Who drew thee from the dust thou may'st be  
laid.

And as thy soul forth from thy body goes,  
Let the bright angels meet thee, and enthroned  
In judgment let the Apostles sit around,  
And conquering host of white-robed martyrs  
come,  
And choir of virgins all with lilies crowned.

Confessors, patriarchs, prophets, let them come  
To meet thee and to fold thee in their arms,  
And O may Christ with sweet and gentle face  
Await thee, and among that blessed throng  
Who e'er stand by Him bid thee take thy place.

And never may'st thou know the darkness dread,  
Nor the tormenting fire ; and in fear  
Let foulest Satan and his crew take flight  
Before the angels that around thee stand  
Into the chaos of eternal night.

Let God arise and scattered be His foes,  
And those who hate Him flee ; and as the smoke  
Doth vanish, and as wax doth melt away  
Before the fire, so the wicked all  
Will fail and fall and perish in God's day.

May Christ, who hung in torments on the cross  
All for thy sake, from torments save thee now;  
May Christ, who death of ignominy died  
All for thy sake, from everlasting death  
Thy soul preserve, and place thee at His side

May Christ, the Son of the Eternal God,  
And the true Shepherd who doth know His sheep  
Acknowledge thee His own, and bid thee stay  
In the green pastures of His Paradise,  
All stain of sin for ever washed away.

And may'st thou reach this day thy goal, and  
gaze  
On thy Redeemer face to face, and see  
All truth unveiled, and know for evermore,  
Amid the blest companions of thy joy,  
How sweet thy God to love and to adore.

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V

SCENE I.—*Convent at Drontheim.* SINTRAM,  
THORA.

SINTRAM.

Sister, sister ! I am weary,  
Compass'd all with ill around me,  
Daily drawn to do some wrong,  
Bringing forth no fruits of virtue,  
Idly dragging life along.  
Years thirteen within the Moonrock  
Have I dwelt, and every winter  
Back my dreadful dreams return ;  
More and more for our poor father  
Doth my heart with longing yearn.  
Ah ! he still with evil comrades  
Pagan rites and oaths doth follow,  
Lawless warfare makes, and never  
Suffers priest his home to enter :  
Is it so to be for ever ?

I

## THORA.

Courage, brother ; not for ever ;  
For the dawn at last will glimmer,  
And the storm-wind cease to blow,  
Green and gold the meadows glisten,  
Where was spread the waste of snow.  
Tell me not thy life is worthless :  
Even here within the cloister  
Sounds the echo of thy deeds,  
How the multitude of toilers  
Turn to thee in all their needs ;  
How so oft the mighty Biorn  
Thou hast drawn from evil warfare,  
Ancient feuds hast made to cease,  
Built again the ruined homesteads,  
Been the messenger of peace.  
Dost thou suffer strife within thee ?  
'Tis a sign that thou art chosen  
E'en the noblest part to take,  
Heavy burdens gladly bearing,  
Easy road for others to make.  
Nay, and now to thee is trusted  
High emprise of heavenly knighthood,

That a captive soul be freed ;  
For upon our hapless father  
Cometh hour of utmost need.  
Hearken well unto my message :  
Go at nightfall on the morrow,  
Enter once again his hall ;  
But prepare as I shall tell thee,  
Lest thou waver, halt, and fall.  
Tread to-day the winding pathway  
Through the fir-wood's fragrant mazes,  
Till thou reach the hermit's cell ;  
He will know thy visit's purpose,  
E'en to hear a voice from hell.  
Ah ! those depths of woe eternal !  
Yet if wisdom, justice, mercy,  
Ne'er had framed that dread abode,  
Who amongst us dare make boasting  
He would tread the upward road.  
And if God at last must pardon,  
Then at last his foes would triumph,  
Unrepented, mocking sin  
'Mid the penitent and sinless,  
Place of endless joy would win.  
Needful then a doom eternal,



Needful fear for spirit wavering,  
Needful rock whereon is built  
Fortress that shall ne'er surrender  
To the powers of shame and guilt,

SINTRAM.

I will do thy bidding, sister,  
Only with thy prayers uphold me.

THORA.

Fare thee well, my brother dear.  
In the name of Christ go forward,  
Mortal conflict draweth near.

SCENE II.—HERMIT'S cell. *Evening. A HERMIT in prayer, who rises as SINTRAM enters.*

HERMIT.

Son, I know full well the purpose  
That hath brought thee through the forest  
To my cell, thou child of sorrow ;  
Voice within me plainly telleth  
Mighty issue on the morrow.

God hath heard thy sister's pleading,  
Bids a soul from hell's abysses  
Bear unwilling witness here,  
Truth proclaim 'mid wails despairing,  
Fill thee with a saving fear.  
I must quit thee : kneeling humbly  
Here await the voice revealing  
Secrets of the hopeless land ;  
Lest perchance thy senses fail thee,  
Grasp a cross in thy right hand.  
Kneel and listen ; never question  
Must thou ask, and when are ended  
Words and sounds of hell, outpour  
Prayers to Him who victory giveth,  
Then go forth, delay no more.

*[Exit HERMIT. SINTRAM grasps a  
crucifix and kneels. Presently a  
moaning is heard from below, and  
then a voice as of one in pain.]*

## LOST SOUL

I speak because I must, and witness give  
Unwillingly constrained ; for if my will  
Could work its way, thy body would I tear

Into ten thousand fragments, and endow  
Each with a soul, the greater pain to bear.  
And these ten thousand all I would cast down  
E'en to the darkest deepest pit of hell,  
And heap upon them unimagined woe,  
Because I see reflected in thy soul  
The hated image of my heavenly foe.  
For hatred doth consume mine inmost being,  
All good perforce I hate in hating God,  
And could'st thou place me in the heaven  
above,  
Freed from my fiery chains, that I might see  
The sights of beauty, hear the songs of love :  
No joy could be my part ; for every flower  
In that celestial garden, every note  
Of music wafted from the angelic choirs,  
And every soul and spirit of the blest,  
Would kindle in mine heart the deadly fires.  
For God alone is source of all their good ;  
And Him I hold in hatred uttermost,  
And cannot seek the good that is my bane,  
And, torn asunder, idly strive ; nor end  
Is to be found, or respite to my pain.  
I speak because I must : mine innocence

I lost, and then my faith ; and as I passed  
    Within hell's gates, they closed with dreadful  
    clang

Behind me, and more dreadful all around  
    The molten walls with fiendish laughter  
    rang.

“ Fool ! fool ! ” re-echoed through the laden air,  
“ The jewel of thy soul to cast away,

    That thou might'st wallow in a filthy pool  
For a brief instant, and as wisdom hold  
    An idle sophistry, accursèd fool.”

And all too clearly then I saw my life,  
I saw my folly, and the worm began

    To gnaw that dieth not ; and the foul weight  
Fell on me of my sins, and vain remorse ;

    And I believed in God, but all too late.  
My changeless portion now the second death  
With all the wicked ; nor hath friendship place

    Amongst us, but fierce enmity of hell,  
And endless unbefriended solitude,

    Our love all gone for those we loved so well.  
Our cries of fruitless rage unceasing sound,  
Yet ne'er the idle blasphemies of earth

    Are heard, for heavenly justice shines so clear

That none in hell can murmur, nor complaint  
Can utter, but can only hate and fear.

And dreadful envy rends our hearts in twain  
As the unnumbered throng of blessèd souls

Mounts upward to the Father's home above,  
The poor, the simple, and the penitent, while we  
Are outcasts evermore from every love.

I speak because I must : there is a place  
That had been thine in hell, if ne'er betimes  
Had stayed thine headlong course some hid-  
den power ;

A place so dreadful could thine eyes behold,  
That thou would'st sink in death that very  
hour.

I speak because I must : bid thee take heed,  
For the eternal dungeon yet is thine,

Unless thou conquer in the coming strife :  
Take heed, beware, the issue all supreme  
Is death unending or unending life.

*[A horrible moaning is heard. SINTRAM  
continues in prayer, and presently rises  
and leaves the cell in silence.]*

SCENE III. — BIORN'S *Castle. Great hall.*

BIORN *and the* LITTLE MASTER *seated,*  
*the golden boar's-head between them, from*  
*which they drink. Suits of armour lean*  
*propped up against the table by every seat.*  
*Enter* SINTRAM.

SINTRAM.

Father, who doth sit beside thee  
As thy guest?

BIORN.

So long, my Sintram,  
Hast thou this mine hall forsaken,  
That my comrade here hath entered,  
And thy vacant place hath taken.  
But no matter ; thrust behind thee  
One of these old suits of armour ;  
Take the place and make it thine,  
Join our pledges o'er the boar's-head,  
Fragrant with the southern wine.

LITTLE MASTER.

Join us, noble lord Sir Sintram,  
And if haply rise a spectre

From the armour overthrown,  
O'er your shoulder peep, what harm  
Well, he'll leave our wine alone.  
Come and join us, never falter,  
Drain the wine-cup ; songs and laugh  
Mingle with the wine—and more—  
For delights I here can bring you  
Passing all assayed before.  
Gabrielle still lives and loves you ;  
Time her beauty hath not lessened,  
Gloweth fresh her colour still,  
Still the form and smile bewitching—  
She is yours if ye but will.  
Even now upon the waters  
Back to him who holds her captive  
Sadly, slowly she doth sail :—  
Grant me days but three : she cometh  
Driven here by magic gale.  
O'er the winds ye know my power,  
And as earnest of her coming,  
See the loved one ye desire :  
[*A phantom of GABRIELLE apt  
very beautiful and weeping.*]  
How the longing for your presence

Burns her heart with secret fire.  
Pledge substantial, instant pleasure  
Will ye have? Then fairest maiden,  
Of the peasants, e'er this hour,  
Otto's sweetest sister Ulla  
Here shall stand within your power.  
Drain but once this sparkling goblet :  
Riseth straightway on your darkness  
Ulla like the star of morning,  
Harbinger of golden sunrise,  
Gabrielle the heavens adorning.  
Drink : ye need the cup of gladness.

## BIORN.

Wherefore dost thou turn in silence  
On my guest a face so wan?  
Once I thought thee wondrous like him,  
But all likeness now hath gone.

## SINTRAM.

God forgive me that such likeness  
E'er my guilty face o'ershadowed.  
[*To the LITTLE MASTER.*] Guest, thou  
hast most rightly said



That I need the boar's-head goblet  
And the draught of deep blood-red.

*[He seizes the cup, and with a stroke of  
his sword severs it in twain, and  
lets it fall upon the floor, all the  
wine being spillt.]*

Spilt be all thy deadly venom,  
Cup of heathendom and foulness ;  
Shattered let the fragments lie ;

And away, vile guest, I bid thee,  
In the name of God most high.

*[The LITTLE MASTER flies amid  
strange noise. All the lights go  
out, and in the glimmer are seen  
the spectres of the dead knights,  
each over his armour.]*

BIORN.

Son, thou art not here the master ;  
Cam'st unbidden to our feasting ;

Now hast loosed the spectres all,  
And I see amid the darkness

Ghastly faces fill the hall.  
Oh, that hither Little Master

Back would come with merry jesting !

Ah ! he cometh, and the door

Openeth.

SINTRAM.

Father, if he entereth,

We are lost for evermore.

BIORN.

Enter, for it was not Biorn

Bid thee forth into the darkness ;

'Tis my will that thou should'st stay.

SINTRAM.

God in heaven, give me courage,

Give me strength to kneel and pray.

[*Kneeling.*] Great Judge of all the living and  
the dead,

Man's author and defender, who hast willed

Celestial likeness on our souls to set,

Oh, suffer not that here Thine enemy

Approach to snare Thy servants in his net.

[*Standing up.*] Get thee gone, thou ancient  
serpent ;

By the Holy Spirit's power

I adjure thee, speed thee forth ;  
Back to depths of hell profoundest  
Flee, thou vessel of God's wrath.

[*Kneeling again.*] O Victor who upon the  
cross o'ercam'st

Both sin and death, and the ill work undidst  
Done by the first transgressor, hearken, Lord !  
Nor let the foe make boast that all in vain  
For us Thy suppliants Thy blood was poured.

[*Standing up again.*] Wicked tempter,  
cease thy troubling ;

Christ hath conquered, and His children  
Trample on thee, martyrs all,

Virgins, penitents, confessors,

At their feet thou needs must fall.

[*Kneeling again.*] O Lamb of God, immaculate  
and true,

Who treadest on the asp and basilisk,

And mak'st the serpent and the lion as dust,  
And hast been slain that we might ever live :

Oh, save us now ; in Thee is all our trust.

[*A furious tempest arises. SINTRAM continues praying. BIORN falls back in a swoon on his chair.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Moonrock Castle. Outside the chapel door.* The CHAPLAIN. SINTRAM.

CHAPLAIN.

Sintram, now the hour approaches  
Both for thee and for thy father  
All decisive. Once again  
Must thou forth to face the darkness,  
Reach the house of guilt and pain.  
Nobly yesternight thou foughtest  
In thy father's hall, an earnest  
Of the issue of to-night ;  
To the Moonrock I recalled thee,  
That thou should'st be armed aright :  
Armed with justice as thy breastplate,  
For thy sword God's Word all piercing,  
Girt with truth thy loins around,  
Bearing shield of faith that casteth  
Hell's darts quenched upon the ground.  
Thou hast prayed thro' all the hours,  
While hath lain thy father senseless,  
Closed in trance his flaming eyes,  
Closed as if for aye ; yet surely

He will wake before he dies :  
Wake and gaze with utmost terror  
Who shall pass beneath the lintel,  
    Messenger of heaven or hell ;  
All is lost if come that other ;  
    If 'tis thou, then all is well.  
I will follow, but the entry  
Thou the first to make art chosen,  
    First to melt the heart of stone ;  
I will follow, but the dark road  
    Thou must tread it all alone.  
Ride in all thy knightly armour,  
Token of thy noble office,  
    Witness of thy noble life,  
Symbol of the ghostly armour  
    Needed for the inward strife.  
Forward ride, let nothing turn thee  
From thy course that is appointed ;  
    Nor will rise the powers of night  
Whilst from turret of this chapel  
    Shines behind thee friendly light.  
But at last, in winding defile,  
Rocks on either side o'erhanging,  
    Friendly light will all be hidden,

Hell will seek to turn thee backward  
From the course that thou art bidden.  
Turn not back tho' darkness veil thee,  
Tho' to fall the heavens threaten,  
Tho' the earth asunder crack,  
And the rocks close in around thee :  
In God's name, oh ! turn not back !

## SINTRAM.

Oh, that God should choose a vessel  
Weak as I for such great purpose !

## CHAPLAIN.

Weakness is thy strength this hour ;  
For 'tis written : E'en made perfect  
In infirmity is power.

SCENE V.—*A narrow rocky defile. Faint lurid light. Reptiles creep on all sides. The LITTLE MASTER, now undisguisedly an evil spirit, hideous and of mighty stature, blocks the way. Enter SINTRAM in armour on his war-horse, and beside him DEATH, in cowl and long robe, riding a small horse.*

SINTRAM.

See, thou sad and strange companion,  
Some one bars the narrow causeway,  
And I scarcely can discern  
Whether man it is or monster  
Fiercely bids us backward turn.

DEATH.

Only One can turn me backward ;  
'Tis not He : all others vainly  
Seek to stay mine onward course.  
Wilt thou pass ? 'Tis I will help thee,  
Not thy spear, nor shield, nor horse.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool ! turn backward ; death awaits thee  
If one step thou makest forward.



Nay, already at thy side  
Rideth Death ; for yet thy comrade  
Closely thou hast not descried.  
[*The robe falls from DEATH, who  
appears as a skeleton with an hour-  
glass in his hand.*]  
Wilt thou onward ? Wilt thou suffer  
Grinning skeleton to clutch thee,  
Quench thy life in torments slow ?

SINTRAM.

If the will of God ordaineth,  
E'en with Death I'll forward go.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool accurst in thine abjection !  
Feeding hopes with fond illusions,  
Boasting thou hast bravely striven :  
I, who know the nether secrets,  
Tell thee thou art not forgiven.  
Fool ! To me thou would'st not listen,  
Would'st not drink the cup of pleasure,  
When I sought thee as a friend,  
And didst think by prayers and watchings  
Joys to gain that would not end.



Fool ! for both have slipped thy grasping,  
Earth and heaven, pleasure, virtue ;

All is over : hear thy knell.

*[A bell is heard sounding loud and  
harsh.]*

Thou hast sinned past all forgiveness,  
And thine endless doom is hell.

SINTRAM.

'Tis written : Though your sins like crimson be,  
O Israel, white as wool they shall be made,  
And come and try me now, so saith the Lord ;  
And be your sins like scarlet, they shall be  
Like snow upon the hill-tops freshly poured.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Fool ! again thine hopes are idle :  
Even had'st thou now forgiveness,  
Never could'st thou persevere,  
Never live the life of virtue,  
With a thousand tempters near :  
World and flesh and evil spirits  
Compass all the ways around thee,  
Thou wilt fall as in the past ;

He who made thee will ensnare thee,  
Cast thee down to hell at last.

## SINTRAM.

'Tis written : As a father for his child /  
Compassion hath, so hath the Lord our God  
For us His children, knowing well our frame,  
Long-suffering, in mercy plenteous,  
Remembering the dust from whence we came.

## EVIL SPIRIT

Self-deceiver, blind and foolish !  
Thinkest thou to live in virtue,  
Die in peace, where others failed ?  
What have Ruric's prayers and moanings,  
What the warden's tears availed ?  
Both in deepest hell are buried,  
Lost for ever ; and in foulness,  
'Neath fair mantle overdrawn,  
Live thy Gabrielle and Folko :  
Better they had ne'er been born.

## SINTRAM,

'Tis written : Slandorous accuser thou,  
Man's adversary, falsehood's first contriver.

But now the sinless second Eve thine head  
Hath crushed. O Satan ! flee, for He doth bid  
Whose name is full of majesty and dread.

*[The EVIL SPIRIT disappears with a dreadful cry of rage and terror. The rocks seem to close in, the earth to gape.]*

*[To DEATH.]* Come, thou faithful friend beside  
me,

Let us onward ; grasp my bridle.

Ah ! thy face hath grown so soft,  
Like the mists of early morning  
Melting as they rise aloft.

*[The way opens, and SINTRAM and  
DEATH ride onward.]*

SCENE VI.—BIORN'S *Castle.* BIORN *lying in  
his sick chamber.* The CHAPLAIN *near the  
door.*

CHAPLAIN.

Sintram waiteth near, and quickly  
Shall be with thee.

*[Exit. Enter SINTRAM.]*

BIORN.

Welcome, Sintram.

Sit thee here beside my bed ;  
Message yet I have to give thee  
Ere they lay me 'mid the dead.

SINTRAM.

O my father ! must thou leave me,  
Leave me when thou scarce hast clasped  
me

To thine arms in love once more ?  
Must our lives, in joy united,  
Ah ! be sundered as before ?  
Let me nurse thee in thy sickness,  
Let me watch thee, guard thee, serve thee,  
Till thy locks are white as snow.  
Dost thou shake thine head so sadly ?  
O my father ! must thou go ?

BIORN.

I must go, yet not asunder  
Need we live, but close united,  
Linked in bonds of faith, my son.

As thou lovest me, be joyful,  
For the victory is won.  
Listen, Sintram, and my message  
Bear to Thora and to Astrid,  
Tell them that my dying breath  
Witness gives of God's compassion,  
All so easy making death.  
Death no more the frightful spectre,  
Ever lurking in the darkness,  
Waiting for the dreaded hour,  
Then to throttle us in torments,  
Crush us with relentless power.  
Ah ! not so, my son, if only  
Hands upraised in supplication,  
Hearts with sorrow smitten be ;  
Then, thro' doors of grace wide opened,  
Death as ancient friend we see :  
Friend that sets us free from bondage,  
Friend that through the years expected  
Naught but evil doth destroy,  
And our darkness lifting, leads us  
Into sunlight, into joy :  
Light that fades not, joy that ends not.  
Oh, the loving Heart and wounded



That with blood our debts hath paid !  
Oh, how sweet to die, when dying  
God hath all so easy made !

*[He sinks back exhausted. SINTRAM  
buries his face in his hands. Pre-  
sently is heard without a child's  
voice singing.]*

CHILD [*sings*].

The storm is passed ; the mighty banks of  
cloud

Sink eastward, and each moist and glistening  
field

Fresh flowers now and verdant grass doth  
yield :

Soft murmureth the wind that was so loud,  
And waters that seemed nigh to be their shroud

The sailors see all sparkling, and revealed

The azure depths ; and Nature's scars are  
healed,

And many a head in grateful prayer is bowed.

For us one day will all life's storms be past,

If the true Pilot we will take as guide ;

For he will make our ship securely ride

O'er the tempestuous sea, and come at last  
To the sweet haven free from every blast  
'Mid flowers and sunshine ever to abide.

BIORN.

Who without has sung so sweetly,  
Voice of innocence upraising  
Like the warbling of a bird ?

SINTRAM.

'Tis the little lad who leadeth  
Rolf the blind, that thou hast heard,

BIORN.

Rolf ! that name recalls another.  
[*In altered tone.*] Bloodless are thy lips,  
Verena.

Say, oh ! why doth toll that bell ?  
Closed her eyes, and unawakened  
By the deep-resounding knell.  
Is she dead ?—O God ! Thy judgment  
On mine evil life hath fallen !—  
[*In his former tone.*] Ah ! but all Thy  
ways are love :

Broken was our earthly union  
To be knit for ever above.  
[*Faintly.*] Voice doth fail me—children,  
pardon !  
Motherless—

SINTRAM.

O father ! father !  
Melts mine heart with grief away ;  
Draweth near the hour of parting ?  
Canst thou, ah ! no longer stay ?  
[*He falls weeping by the bedside, and  
BIORN lays his hand on SINTRAM'S  
head.*]

SCENE VII.—*Drontheim Convent. The CHAP-  
LAIN speaking to THORA.*

CHAPLAIN.

Scarce had glimmered yet the dawning,  
When in haste I left the Moonrock,  
And within my breast a voice  
Whispered soft : The day that riseth  
Many hearts will make rejoice.



Ne'er before so bright the daystar  
From the vault of dark blue glistened ;  
    Ne'er so lovely as that morn  
Strove the clouds of pearl and ruby  
    All the heavens to adorn ;  
Ne'er with such a golden radiance  
Rose at last the sun upon us ;  
    Mists and darkness sped away,  
Symbol of the Sun of justice  
    Rising for eternal day.  
On I journeyed, neared the castle,  
Closed for many a year before me,  
    Out I saw a horseman ride,  
Bearing message from his master  
    That I hasten to his side.  
In the portal Sintram met me,  
Ruddy was his face, and glowing  
    Bright with more than morning ray ;  
Not a word he spoke, but led me  
    Where his dying father lay.  
Mercy, justice met together ;  
Forth was poured the blood redeeming ;  
    Washed away was every stain,  
And the pure celestial Spirit



Living temple found again.  
Then awhile I left thy father  
Sweetly with his son communing  
Till at last there came the call,  
That the inmates of the castle  
Gather round the deathbed all.  
Knights in armour came and squires,  
Swordsmen, archers, every servant  
To the lowest, and with tears  
Mighty Biorn asked their pardon  
For the wrongs of all the years.  
And his eyes, once fiercely flaming,  
As a girl's were soft and gentle,  
And the stern and swarthy face  
Now was pallid, sunken, haggard,  
Yet adorned with strange new grace.  
And the warriors in their armour  
Sobbed like children, and around him  
Knelt and prayed. God grant that I  
Death may find so sweet and friendly  
When mine hour comes to die.

[Exit. Presently enter SINTRAM.]

## THORA.

Brother, doubly dearest brother,  
Welcome! Yet I fear to grieve thee  
With the answer I must give,  
Whether, lands and castles leaving,  
In the cloister thou may'st live.  
For I know thine ardent longing ;  
But a voice in prayer hath told me  
Years must yet their courses run,  
Years in all good deeds abounding,  
Ere thy work without is done.  
Yet, if faithfully thou servest  
Him to whom a thousand summers  
Are but as a fleeting day,  
Soon will all thy toil be ended,  
Quick will speed the years away.  
Then thou mayest seek the abbey,  
Heart and hands in supplication  
Ever raised that God may spare ;  
Ever silent night melodious  
Making with thy chanted prayer.  
Nor is wanting present favour,  
Guerdon of thy strife victorious,

Gladsome message comes at last :  
Know that all thine evil visions  
Now from hence are gone and past.  
For in vain hath no man cherished  
Trust and patience.

SINTRAM.

Sister dearest,  
Thine the patience, thine the trust ;  
And thy pleading voice prevailing,  
Back the powers of ill hath thrust.

SCENE VIII.—*A Terrace outside SINTRAM'S castle. Summer evening. Distant view of the sea.* FOLKO, GABRIELLE, ENGELTRAM, the CHAPLAIN, ROLF (*led by a boy*). *Knights, squires, pages, and servants.*

ROLF.

Early rode away Sir Sintram,  
Half a score of troopers with him,  
Bent on errand all of peace,  
Feud of blood, embittered, ancient,  
Utterly to make to cease.

Homeward now he surely rideth ;  
Rest awhile and wait his coming,  
Noble and most welcome guests ;  
Squires and pages in attendance  
Stand around for your behests.

## GABRIELLE.

Better place could not be chosen  
Than this lofty castle terrace ;  
Let us watch the heavens glowing  
All with golden light transparent,  
Softly mingling colours showing.  
Ah ! but Rolf, I had forgotten ;  
Hid from thee is outward nature,  
Veiled her splendour from thy sight ;  
Yet within thy soul a brightness  
Fairer gleams than earthly light.  
*[Sits and converses with ROLF on one  
side of the terrace. FOLKO and the  
CHAPLAIN on the other.]*

FOLKO *[to the CHAPLAIN]*.

Canst thou tell me why the towers,  
Why the walls are all encompassed

With innumerable birds,  
Making a melodious circle  
That the lofty castle girds?

## CHAPLAIN.

'Tis the flock of doves thou seest,  
Joyous band of blue-gray warblers ;  
These have made the towers their own,  
Where before for e'en an instant  
Never bird to rest was known.  
All at once they came and rested  
On the towers at the daybreak,  
When Sir Sintram rode within,  
And from out the castle hastened  
All the ministers of sin.  
None will harm the gentle inmates,  
And they strangely seem protected  
From the ravening birds of prey ;  
Oft o'er Sintram's head they hover,  
Love beside him close to stay.  
So the castle seems a dovecot,  
Yea, and every cleft and crevice,  
Ledge and moulding, glisten bright,

L

With unnumbered fragrant flowers  
From the moat to topmost height.  
None before for years had blossomed ;  
Now amid the birds and flowers  
Lives the lord of Drontheim here ;  
Nay, and with the doves' soft cooing  
Mingle children's voices clear.  
For it is the master's bidding,  
In the courtyards, in the gardens,  
All unhindered they shall play :  
See a group of little maidens  
Mount e'en now the rocky way.  
*[Enter ULLA leading a group of peasant  
children bearing flowers.]*

ULLA [*sings*].  
Gentle lady, from the bowers,  
From the mountains, bounding, singing,  
Hither to the sunlit towers  
Haste to come the children, bringing  
Tribute of our northern flowers.

FIRST CHILD.  
Flowers first I offer blue,  
Gentians from the mountain height,

Blue rock-speedwell here for you,  
And the northern aconite,  
Showing fealty fast and true.

SECOND CHILD.

I will offer flowers red,  
Showing love that knows not fear,  
Purple gentian's lifted head,  
Rosy northern woodbine here,  
Vetches too from mossy bed.

THIRD CHILD.

Tribute mine of flowers white,  
Spotless purity that show,  
Mountain bride that loves the height,  
Starry saxifrage aglow,  
Reinblom's fairy blossoms bright.

ALL THE CHILDREN.

Gentle lady, from the bowers,  
From the mountains, bounding, singing,  
Hither to the sunlit towers  
We have come to seek thee, bringing  
Tribute of our northern flowers.



GABRIELLE.

Tribute such as yours is welcome,  
Sweet-voiced children of the Northland ;  
Flowers all I love, and those  
Rival in their gleaming colours  
Lily, hyacinth, and rose.

*[The children bring her the flowers and  
she kisses them.]*

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, hark, a bugle sounding  
Tells that Sintram draweth near us ;  
See from yonder grove of pine  
Forth he cometh, and his armour  
All like burnished gold doth shine.

GABRIELLE.

'Tis the slanting rays of sunlight  
Make the steel as golden armour.

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, yonder floats a cloud  
That the pine-trees' pointed summits  
With a golden mist doth shroud.

## GABRIELLE.

'Tis a cloud of summer evening,  
Radiant as though appointed  
Resting-place for angels' feet.  
But arise and hasten forward  
Kinsman thine and lord to greet.  
[FOLKO, ENGELTRAM, and others  
descend to meet SINTRAM, and pre-  
sently return with him.]

## SINTRAM.

Swiftly riding horseman met me,  
Brought me, as I journeyed homeward,  
Tidings of so great a joy,  
Like a rosy dream enchanting,  
That grey morning would destroy.  
Can it be that, all forgetting,  
All forgiving, naught mistrusting,  
Willing ye have sought this shore,  
Not unwilling thrust by tempest,  
Folko, Gabrielle, once more?

## FOLKO.

Speak not, Sintram, of forgiveness ;  
Years ago thou wert forgiven ;  
Not for this we crossed the sea,  
But to give thee surest token  
Utmost trust is ours in thee.  
For the echo of thy praises,  
Like sweet music o'er the waters,  
Oft hath reached our home afar ;  
O'er the dark horizon gleaming  
Bright hath shone the northern star.  
But from Gabrielle 'tis fittest  
Thou should'st take our dearest token,  
Her's the fittest voice to say  
What the purpose of our journey,  
What the message of this day.

GABRIELLE [*leading ENGELTRAM forward*].

Engeltram doth stand before thee,  
Engeltram, our hope and gladness,  
Engeltram—our only son :  
Him we trust unto thy keeping  
Till his boyhood's days are done ;

Teach him all the ways and customs,  
Brave and noble, of the Northland ;  
Teach him Christian knight to be,  
Fearless, faithful, self-despising,  
Pure and gentle, like to thee.

[SINTRAM takes ENGELTRAM by the  
hand, kneels a moment in silent  
prayer, and then rises.]

SINTRAM.

Rolf, my friend, the oldest, dearest,  
Come and share with me my gladness.

ROLF.

Be the ways of God adored !  
Now thou dost Thine aged servant  
All in peace dismiss, O Lord.

SINTRAM.

Gabrielle's and Folko's footsteps  
May their son unfailing follow—

[He gazes upwards and speaks in altered  
voice as if in a trance.]

Follow surely will, and win,

Through the years it shines upon me,  
Victory o'er death and sin.

ENGELTRAM.

Mother, see the cloud that hovers  
Over Sintram's head, and showeth  
Many-coloured angels' wings.  
Father, hear th' entrancing music !  
Hark ! it is an angel sings.

*[All gaze upwards at the cloud,  
where seven angels are seen in  
white garments and with many-  
coloured wings.]*

FIRST ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall be given  
The fruit to taste of the celestial tree,  
The tree of life, to all that well have striven,  
And growing in a garden fair to see,  
With verdant foliage ne'er by tempest riven.

SECOND ANGEL.

To him that overcometh, and is found  
A faithful servant in the bridegroom's hour,

Shall angels bring, that he be royally crowned,  
A garland made of every fragrant flower  
That ne'er shall fade or fall upon the ground.

## THIRD ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall appear  
The morning star that never dies away,  
And from his heart shall pluck out every fear,  
And clothe him with the light of endless day,  
And brightly beam upon him ever near.

## FOURTH ANGEL.

To him that overcometh shall a stole  
Be giv'n as white as freshly fallen snow ;  
And as he draweth near the long-sought goal,  
A mighty angel to all men shall show  
His name for ever writ on heaven's scroll.

## FIFTH ANGEL.

To him that overcometh there shall sound  
A voice so sweet that ne'er he heard before,  
And in his ear a new name shall resound  
That no man knoweth, and for evermore  
The heavenly voice shall compass him around.

## SIXTH ANGEL.

And he that overcometh shall be made  
A pillar in the temple of our God,  
With graces, gifts, beatitudes inlaid ;  
And in the courts that no man yet hath trod  
Shall dwell for evermore, in joy arrayed.

## SEVENTH ANGEL.

And he that overcometh, and the sword  
Of love and sorrow welcomed to his heart,  
Shall sit upon the throne, and his reward,  
Ne'er from his Life and Love to be apart,  
Himself no more, but living in his Lord.

## CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Of Him who first man's arch-foe overcame,  
And the frail garment of man's nature wore,  
And for man's sake unmeasured pain and shame  
And inward utter woe unconquered bore,  
Be praised for ever the Most Holy Name.

END OF ACT V. AND OF THE DRAMA.

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